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By LADY GREGORY

Drama

SEVEN SHORT PLAYS.
FOLK-HISTORY PLAYS. 2 VOLS.
NEW COMEDIES.
THE GOLDEN APPLE.
THE DRAGON.
OUR IRISH THEATRE. A CHAPTER
OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.
THE KILTARTAN MOLIERE.
THE IMAGE AND OTHER PLAYS.
THREE WONDER PLAYS.

Irish Folk-Lore and Legend

VISIONS AND BELIEFS. 2 VOLS.
CUCHULAIN OF MURITHEMNE.
GODS AND FIGHTING MEN.
SAINTS AND WONDERS.
POETS AND DREAMERS.
THE KILTARTAN POETRY BOOK.
THE KILTARTAN HISTORY BOOK.

HUGH LANE'S LIFE AND ACHIEVE-
MENT, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF
THE DUBLIN GALLERIES.

The Image

and Other Plays

By

Lady Gregory



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Augusta, Lady Gregory

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THE IMAGE: A PLAY
IN THREE ACTS

*WHEN THIS PLAY WAS FIRST PRINTED
ELEVEN YEARS AGO I DEDICATED IT "TO
MY NEPHEWS HUGH LANE AND JOHN
SHAWE-TAYLOR, IMAGE-MAKERS," AS I NOW
DO TO THEIR DEAR MEMORY.*

PERSONS

THOMAS COPPINGER	.	<i>A Stonecutter.</i>
MARY COPPINGER	. .	<i>His Wife.</i>
MALACHI NAUGHTON	.	<i>A Mountainy Man.</i>
BRIAN HOSTY	. . .	<i>A Small Farmer.</i>
DARBY COSTELLO	. .	<i>A Seaweed Hawker.</i>
PEGGY MAHON	. .	<i>An Old Midwife.</i>
PETER MANNION	. .	<i>A Carrier.</i>

THE IMAGE

ACT I

Scene: A village street with a thatched house on either side, both whitewashed, one very poor. Grey sea and grey hills seen beyond a wall of loose stones. Some headstones are propped against the wall, one inscribed "ERECTED FOR THOMAS COPPINGER AND POSTERITY." Coppinger is looking at it. Mrs. Coppinger, with her back to him, is looking out over wall.

Mrs. Coppinger: (Putting out clothes to dry on the wall.) If we heard noises in the night time I heard a great silence now. I was looking out to see what was it ailed the place. What has happened all the neighbours I wonder?

Coppinger: I was wondering that myself. I don't see Brian Hosty or Darby Costello in any place, or anyone at all only Malachi Naughton, the crazy mountainy man, is coming hither from the strand.

(He sits down and chips at headstone.)

Mrs. Coppinger: It is a queer thing you to be content, Thomas Coppinger, and you knocking out a living among the dead. It is no way content I myself would be, and to be following a trade that is all for gloom.

Coppinger: It is not, but in the world wide there is not so lively or so pleasant a trade. Wait now till I'll sound that out to you. A man to be a herd now, and to be sent back out of the fair with beasts, the very time the sport would begin, or to be landing fish from a hooker and to be made take the tide at the very minute maybe the crowds would be gathering for a race, or an assizes, or a thing of the kind, it is downhearted you would be coming into your own little place, and all the stir left after you. But to be turning back from a burying, and you living, and all that company lying dumb, and the rain coming down through the clay over their heads, and their friends crying them, that is the time your own little cabin would shine out as good as a wake house, in the time a wake house was all one with a dance house.

Mrs. Coppinger: That is not so in this place. No playing or funning or springing, but to be talking they do be, stupid talk about themselves and to be smoking tobacco.

Coppinger: And another thing. It is very answerable to the soul to be always letting your

mind dwell on them that are gone to dust and to ashes, and to be thinking how short they were in the world, and to be striving to put yourself in terror of eternity. "Vanity of vanities," said King Solomon, and he owning all his riches and his own seven hundred wives.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's time for you give in to my asking, and to bring me away to the States, and the work all wore away from you, the way you have no earthly thing to put your hand to but that headstone of your own. There doesn't be so many wakes as there were, or so many burials, or the half of the people in the world that there used to be.

Coppinger: The headland is a very wholesome place, without killing or murdering, and the youngsters all go foreign, and in my opinion the dead are nearly all dead—unless it might be old Peggy Mahon within in the house beyond.

Mrs. Coppinger: With all the children she brought home to the world, and all the women she saved from being brought away, she is near spun out herself. There are some would give the world to be gone altogether with the state she is in. And it's time for her to go anyway. Cross she is and peevish, and in troth she'd be no great loss.

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Coppinger: Let you not be talking that way. It never was a habit of my habits to wish any harm to a neighbour, or to call down misfortune on them at all.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's a poor job to be lettering out your own name and for no profit. And you should be near done by this anyway. "In memory of Thomas Coppinger and Posterity." What is there to put to that but the day of your death, that it would fail you to have foreknowledge of, and the day it's likely you have no remembrance of, that you made your own start on the plains of this world

Coppinger: That is not enough. That is what has to be put on the slab of many a common man, where he did no big thing, or never stretched a hand to the poor.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what will there be to write on your own slab, more than that you lived and died on the Munster side of the headland of Druim-na-Cuan, and knocked out a poor way of living, hammering at hard stones?

Coppinger: No fear of me being left that way. Some thing will come to pass. Some great man might come wanting a monument that would put up my name for ever. Some man so great his death would put away laughter in Ireland.

Mrs. Coppinger: Ah! If it is waiting you are for such a one to die, sure you don't know is he

born at all yet, or his father or his grandfather, or at what time he might be born through the next two thousand years. You are talking as wild as a dream might fall upon you in the night time.

Coppinger: There is dreams and dreams. And at every thousand years some great thing is apt to happen, such as the Deluge or the coming of the Milesians into Ireland—I tell you there is dreams and dreams. (*Turns and chips away at headstone.*)

(*Malachi comes in slowly L. and blinks at them.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: Well, Malachi Naughton, God bless your health, and what's the best news with you? You have the appearance of getting bad nourishment. They were telling me your hens were all ate with the fox. I wonder now you wouldn't quit the mountain side, and come make your dwelling in some place there would be company.

Malachi: The towns do be in uproar and do be crowded, and the roads do be wet and wide; and as to the villages, there is spies in them, and traitors, and people you wouldn't like to be talking with. Too venomous they are and too corrupted with drink. I'd like to keep my own company, and I to have no way of living but the berries of the bush.

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Mrs. Coppinger: There is no crowd in this place to-day, and no person at all to be heard or to be seen.

Malachi: That wasn't so a while ago. (*Turning to Coppinger.*) Tell me, Thomas Coppinger, did you hear e'er a noise in the night time?

Coppinger: What way wouldn't I hear it? Thunder it's likely it was that was breaking from the clouds and from the skies, the same as it did ere yesterday, the time the Kerry men's hooker was destroyed out from Galway. It's likely the weather will cheer up now, the thunder having brought away the venom out of the air.

Malachi: The clouds of the air had no hand in it at all. Thunder is natural. I tell you it is more than thunder came visiting this place last night.

Mrs. Coppinger: I was thinking myself it was no thunder. It was more like the roaring of calves, or the drowning of hundreds, or all the first cousins coming racing with their cars to a wedding after dark.

Coppinger: (*Rises and looks over wall.*) Have it your own way so. I'll go meet Brian and Darby, and they'll tell you was it thunder. I see Brian coming hither over the ridge is above the cliffs. Have you my boots cleaned, Mary, till I'll put them on to my feet?

(*He goes into house.*)

Malachi: It was no thunder was in it, but the night that was full of signs and of wonders.

Mrs. Coppinger: What is it makes you say that? I didn't see any wonder you'd call a wonder. It's likely it is in your own head the wonders were.

Malachi: A little bird of a cock I have, that started crowing in the dark hour of the night, the same as if the dawn had come and put him in mind of Denmark.

Mrs. Coppinger: A cock to crow out of season is no great wonder, and he to be perched on the rafters, and you maybe to be turning yourself on your palliasse, that would be creaking with the nature of the straw.

Malachi: Great noises I heard after that, as if of tearing and splashing and roaring through the tide.

Mrs. Coppinger: I heard them myself as good as you. I was in dread it might be the day of judgment. To put my head in under the quilt I did, till such time as it had passed away.

Malachi: It was not quieted till after the whitening of the dawn in the skies. I went out at that time thinking to see the goat that was up to her kidding time, and she had the rope broke, and the stone thrust away that was in the door of the little pen I had made, and there was no sight or mind of her.

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Mrs. Coppinger: Is it searching after her yet you are, or did you find her gone astray among the rocks?

Malachi: Down by the brink of the sea I found her, a place she never was apt to go, and two young kids beside her, she that never had but the one before; and more than that again——

Mrs. Coppinger: You'll be in Heaven, she to have kidded, the way you'll have a drop of milk with your tea.

Malachi: Two young kids beside her on the salt edge of the tide, and she chewing neither dulse, or carrageen, or seaweed, but lying in full content, and as if browsing upon a little bit of a board.

Mrs. Coppinger: Goats will eat all. There was a neighbour's goat mounted up on my own dresser one time, and made as if to devour the blessed palm was on the wall.

Malachi: Did ever you hear up to this, Mrs. Coppinger, a beast to have got nourishment from a board?

Mrs. Coppinger: I did to be sure. Isn't it the way the body of Blessed Columcille was tracked the time it was sent back across the sea to Ireland for its burying? To sculpture directions on a stick they did, and it was a cow went licking it the time it was come to land. It is likely you heard that yourself?

Malachi: (*Going to her and drawing a board from under his ragged shirt.*) You that can read writing, ma'am, sound out to me now the testimony is on that board.

Mrs. Coppinger: So there is a name on it in painted printing—H, H, u, g, h—Hugh—Hugh O'Lorrha.

Malachi: Hugh O'Lorrha—I was thinking, and I was near certain, the time I saw the letters it was the name of some person was in it, that had sent some message into my hand. Tell me now, ma'am, have you any account at all, or did ever you hear it told who was Hugh O'Lorrha?

Mrs. Coppinger: It seems to me to have heard such a name, but I can put no face to it or no account. There's many things I forgot that I heard in my lifetime. I only recollect things in the broad. (*Shades her eyes and looks out over wall.*)

Malachi: There should be some meaning in it and some message. No doubt about it at all, it was a night full of wonders—Down in the tide there to be the noise as of hundreds, the bird in the rafters making its own outcry, and its call—the goat to be bringing me to that bit of a board—Hugh O'Lorrha, that should be a very high sounding name. What it is at all he is calling to me, and bidding me for to do?

(*Brian Hosty comes in.*)

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Mrs. Coppinger: (*Turning to door.*) Come out here, Thomas. Here is Brian Hosty before you.

Coppinger: (*Coming out.*) There is no need for me go seek him so. Well, now, Brian, didn't you go abroad very early this morning?

Hosty: It's easy rise up and go abroad early the time there does disturbance come, that will put away the sleep from your eyes.

Coppinger: You heard the noises so?

Hosty: What would ail me not to hear them? You would hear that roaring three mile off, as well as you would hear it a mile.

Mrs. Coppinger: Was it a fleet of seals maybe was coming in against the rough weather does be prophesied in the skies?

Hosty: Did any one ever hear a fleet of seals to be giving out a sound like eight eights crying together, or like the seven banshees of Lisheen Crannagh? You to have seen those two beasts fighting through the tide, you would know them not to be seals. Tearing and battling they were. At the time they commenced roaring I went out, and Darby Costello rose up and put the crowbar to his own door, in dread they might be coming into the house.

Mrs. Coppinger: Beasts is it? Tell me now what were they at all.

Hosty: Whales they were—two of them—they never quitted fighting one another till they came up upon the strand, and the salt water went and left them, that you would be sorry to hear them crying and moaning.

Coppinger: And is it on the strand they are presently?

Hosty: They are, and it is on the Connacht side of the headland they took their station, as was right.

Coppinger: Take care but the tide might steal up on them. But I suppose they are dead by this?

Hosty: What would hinder them from being dead? I am after going where they are, myself and Darby Costello. To cut a bit off of one of them I did. The flesh of it was like the dribbled snow, the same as a pig you would kill and would be after cleaning out for hanging, as clean and as white as that. And as for size, you to go up on them, you could see the whole of Galway.

Mrs. Coppinger: Would you say there to be oil in them? I heard in some place the oil would be rendered out of a whale would carry a big price.

Hosty: Oil is it? I took a wisp of straw and lighted it at the side of one of them, and the oil of it went out into the sea, and never mixing with the salt water at all. The whole of the lakes of Ireland and the wide Shannon along with them,

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there is enough of oil in those two whales to make a scum and a covering over the whole of their brim.

Mrs. Coppinger: That now is maybe the luck, Thomas, you were thinking would be drawing towards you. Gather now all the vessels in the place till we'll see what we can bring away of oil. Here now is the tub, and the big pot, and the kettle.

Hosty: I heard one time there was a doctor back in Connemara gave a pound a gallon for the oil was rendered out of a whale. To cure ulcers and cancers I suppose it did, the same as king's blood used to cure the evil.

Mrs. Coppinger: That's a whip of money! Let me see can I empty the milk out of the churn.

(Mr. and Mrs. Coppinger go into house.)

Malachi: (Coming near.) Whales? Did you say it was whales came visiting this strand in the night time?

Hosty: Amn't I after saying that it was?

Malachi: What was it now brought those beasts to be travelling to this headland more than to any other place, and to find their own track to it across the wide ocean?

Hosty: What would bring them but chance, or ignorance or the blindness that came on them with the strokes they were striking and hitting at one another under the waves.

Malachi: It was those beasts so, brought that name and that board of timber. Who now in the wide earthly world will tell me who was Hugh O'Lorrha? (*Goes off.*)

Hosty: (*To Mrs. Coppinger, who has come to door.*) What at all is Malachi raving about, Mrs. Coppinger, with his cracked talk and his questioning?

Mrs. Coppinger. Ah, that is the way he is, and something gone queer in his head. There is nothing left to him in life but high flighty thoughts.

Hosty: (*Looking at vessels.*) Well, Mrs. Coppinger, it's a share of the good things of the world you will be getting this time surely. It's to quit stone-cutting you will bring Thomas Coppinger that time.

Coppinger: (*Leaning out over door.*) No fear of me, Brian. Did ever you find east or west any place at all I broke my word? And isn't it long I promised you to print your own headstone and to dress it for you, the time your end would be drawing near?

Hosty: I'm very thankful to you, Thomas. I am thinking it is a good while you are putting off making an end and a finish of your own slab.

Coppinger: There is reason in that, I am thinking I might get a name yet would look bigger and handsomer on my tomb.

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Hosty: Whatever way you may write out your name or raise it, it will be but Thomas Coppinger in the end.

Mrs. Coppinger: It might not. Look at all that voted for the Parliament going from College Green to England, and that went to bed nothing and rose up lords in the morning! I would like well Thomas to be a lord, with two hundred acres of land.

Hosty: Well, it's the people of Munster are taken up in themselves with pride and with conceit! My joy that I was not reared among them, but in the bright beautiful province of Connacht!

Mrs. Coppinger: Let you keep your great praises of Connacht and your talk for them are the other side of the earth and cannot see into it, as I myself can see it over the mering wall, and the fields that are all a flag, and the thistles as hardy as our own and as bold. It is not here I myself would wish to stop, in a narrow barren place, where you never would get your fill of the world's joy. It's out to America I would go, and a fair wind blowing!

Hosty: I know well what it is you are dreaming to find before you in the States—beer from Denmark, honey out of Greece; rings and brooches and such things as are dear to women; high blood and grandeur and ringing of bells; a silver cushion

having four edges, and you sitting on it through the day time the same as the Queen of Pride, and talking of the ways of the world and the war! But remember now I was in America one time myself!

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't there be grandeurs and good houses in Boston or in New York where many a bright pound was spent upon them?

Hosty: All the grandeurs I saw was never the face of a fire but only a black stove, and not a chimney in the house but only a crooked pipe, and never a spring well but rotten water brought from the Lord knows where, and no way for going out unless you would take a stroll in a street car. And if there was quality food I didn't see it, or a bit of butter that was sweet!

Coppinger: (Leaning in the half door.) Let you leave challenging one another, and look at Darby Costello is running like a heifer had got a pick of a fly, or a rat there would be strong cats following.

Mrs. Coppinger. (Jumps up.) Ask him what will he do with his share of the oil, and see will he be able to make a choice, besides putting insults on his next-door neighbour!

(Costello runs in breathless.)

Hosty: Tell me now what will be your own choice thing out of the spending and the profit of the oil?

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Mrs. Coppinger: Let you choose some big thing will set you free from drawing seaweed till the day of judgment!

Costello: I am striving to tell you that the whales——

Mrs. Coppinger: Tell us out quick now, what is your desire and your choice.

Costello: Ah, now, what is my desire but peace and patience and to give no offence, or have any one annoying me, but there to be no law but love—and if I have another thing to ask it is leave to make my voice heard for one minute only, till you'll hear what I'm striving to tell——

Coppinger: A pound a gallon we are to get out of the oil! It's the whole of us will get our chance!

Costello: Ah, quit talking till I'll tell you— It is little profit you will be getting for yourselves, where the whole country entirely is gathered at this time about the whales. In boats they are come from every side. Drawing lots for strips of them they are, the same as if they were seaweed on the sand.

Hosty: They have no call to them at all! It is we ourselves were the first to find them and to put our mark upon their skin. Did you stand up to them telling them that?

Costello: It isn't easy stand up to a throng of them. From Oranmore they are come I tell you

and from Finevara and Duras and Ballindereen. The Kerry men were wrecked in the hooker were in it along with them, very wicked looking they were.

Hosty: They have no claim at all to be coming to our headland and to be bringing away our prey.

Costello: I was striving to say that much to them, fair and civil; and the face they put on themselves was not the face of a friend would be drinking porter with you, but of an enemy would be coming at you with a gun. To fire a stone at me a one of them did, and they wouldn't leave me till now in the living world if I didn't run. There were rocks threw after me all the length of the road.

(Mrs. Coppinger goes into house.)

Hosty: Give me a hold of a reaping hook till I'll go sweep them before me from where they are, and drive them under the sway of the living fishes of the sea!

Coppinger: (Picking up tools.) It is with my own hammer and my chisel I will tackle them! Leave your hand on a fork, Darby, or a spade, or so much as a big wattle of a stick; and let one of ye be humming Lord Byron's march, and he going out to war!

Hosty: We'll put terror on them! We'll banish them!

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Costello: (Sitting down.) Devil a fear of me! I had my enough, thinking as I did that I had not three minutes to live. There is nothing is worse than your own life, and what call have you to go losing it?

Coppinger: I never would go back before any enemy at all so long as my life would last! I tell you I never felt so merry in my life, and no bad bones about me. I wouldn't be afraid of the worst thing you could meet, a bee coming to sting you, or whatever it might be!

Costello: I wouldn't face them again, I to get all the whales of the big ocean. I tell you they are hardy lads. There's few of the police would like to grabble with them.

Coppinger: It is crippled and crappled you are with age, Darby the way you do be failing in your walk!

Costello: I am up to no such great age, but my feet that are sore with all they sweated. But it's you yourself is getting very slack in your work and very attentive to your bed.

Coppinger: Is it that you are saying I am an old spent man? I'm not so old at all! I'm not as old as the hills of Gowra, whatever age that is! I'm not up to the age of Brian Hosty that has not hardly a blade of hair on his head, and has lost the whole of his teeth.

Hosty: Leave your finger in my mouth till you'll see did I lose my teeth!

(Peter Mannion comes in.)

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it for commands you are come, Peter Mannion, and you going with your car to the town?

Mannion: The priest and the waterguard are after going where there is a gathering of strange lads around and about the two dead fishes on the strand.

Coppinger: Sure it's to sweep the whole troop of them into the sea we are going out at this minute.

Mannion: The priest and the waterguard has them banished back to their own parish and their own district. To give them great abuse his reverence did, and the waterguard threatened them with the law.

Coppinger: Is it to drive them away clear and clean they did?

Mannion: Every whole one of them, big and little.

Coppinger: It's the priest is well able to break a gap before him and to put justice and profit into the hands of his own congregation!

Hosty: To respect the first that came to the whales he will.

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Mannion: It is what I was bid say, there is none of ye at all will get any hold of the whales.

Coppinger: What's that you're saying? And a miracle after coming for to bring me my chance?

Mannion: The priest and the waterguard has laid down that the whole of the gain and the riches within in those two beasts of the sea, is not to be made over to this one or to that one, or to be made any man's profit and his prize, but to be laid out for the good and for the benefit of the whole of the headland, and of this point.

Hosty: It is to the Connacht side they landed. It wouldn't be right giving the Munster side any share.

Mrs. Coppinger: We should give in, so, I suppose and to put up with the loss. It's best not vex a priest or to rub against him as all.

Mannion: Which now of ye is the oldest?

Hosty: What meaning have you asking that?

Mannion: It is what I was bid say, there must some plan be made up without delay, for the spending of whatever will come from the whales. "It is the oldest inhabitant," says the priest, "should be best able to give out judgment as to that,"—and then the waterguard—

Hosty: To make out a plan for the spending is it? That should be a great lift to any person.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Taking Coppinger's arm and pushing him forward.*) Rise up now, Thomas Coppinger, and make your claim. You should be the most ageable person in the place, you are far before seventy years.

Mannion: The waterguard that said then——

Hosty: (*Pushing him away.*) He is not the most ageable, but I that am older than himself. Look at the way he is fresh and flushy in the features, and no way racked looking the same as myself.

(*Mannion sits down and lights pipe.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: No, but tossed hair you are putting on yourself, and a cross face, the way you would look to be old. You to be minding and cleaning yourself you'd keep your youth yet. Tell them out now, Thomas, your age.

Coppinger: What way could I say what age I am? When you are up to seventy year you wouldn't feel the years passing. I'm telling no lie saying that, no more than if I was on my knees to the priest.

Hosty: I to have said you were passed your three score a half hour ago, it's likely you'd fly in my eye; but you have the tune changed now—as quick as any piper.

Coppinger: It's likely I have sixty years, and seventy years and another seventy along with

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them if it was counted right. But you yourself are but upon the bruff of age. Look at you as straight as a ribbon!

Hosty: If I am straight, it is because there is more spirit in the Connacht men than in the Munster tribe, and more of a name for decency! I can remember when you'd walk out as far as the strand to catch soles and turbot and every quality fish, before the trawlers had them all destroyed.

Costello: No, but my mother that remembered my brother falling on me in the cradle, and hiding in the bushes all the day in dread of her. And he was seventy-three when he died.

Hosty: Ah, you weren't any age much that time at all. It is suppler you are than the whole of us. But I myself was six months the time of the big storm, and *that* can tell no lie.

Costello: My dearest life! Sure I remember the big wind myself and all that went before it, if it wasn't I was so neglectful and so heedless in my early time.

Coppinger: My mother, God rest her soul, that I heard saying I had a year more than Brian Hosty. And *she* remembered the landing of the French at Killala. .

Hosty: She did, and the Danes being driven out from Ireland I suppose, and the band playing Brian Boru's march!

(Peggy Mahon appears at her cabin door.)

Mrs. Coppinger: There now is Peggy Mahon can settle the case. There is no person has knowledge of years only herself, where the dates are away and astray, she being such an old resident and drawing to a hundred years. Come out here to us now, Peggy Mahon, and at the fall of night I won't leave you without a drop of milk for your tea.

Coppinger: Ah, she is shook this long time. Where's the use making any appeal to her, and she having but old stories and vanities.

Hosty: Look at here now, ma'am. Didn't you give aid to my own three sons coming into the world, that are at this time buried in Minnesota? And my daughter that is looking at her children's children in Australia? And at that time I was up in age.

Costello: *(Pulling Hosty away from Peggy.)* Look, ma'am, isn't it three score years since you coming to the house the time my first young son was born? And it is what you said, that he was a present from God.

Peggy: So he was, so he was. Every baby is a present from God, it is for God we should attend

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it. It is God puts you into the world and brings you out of it, and beyond that there is a woman in the stars does all.

Coppinger: It is not well in the mind she is, and not remembering.

Peggy: I remember, I remember. Lonesome after the old times I am. I am always remembering bye and bye.

Coppinger: Cast back your mind so, to how many score years is it since you came attending the first wife I had, before I joined with herself secondly in marriage.

Peggy: There is no second marriage, there is but the one marriage. He that was the best comrade, of a hasty man, God Almighty ever put a hand to, was brought away from me with little provocation twenty and half a hundred years ago. Brought away through death he was from this white world, and I myself left after him, a bird alone.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*To Costello.*) The talk she does be always making about Patrick Mahon, you would say, listening to her, he was mostly the pride of the headland. And he but a poor-looking little creature they were telling me, and having an impediment in his speech.

Costello: Old she is, and it's all in her brain the things she does be talking of.

Coppinger: And what way now will a judgment be made, and a decree, which of us should be leader?

Mannion: (*Getting up.*) It's time for you hearken to my news. The priest said the oldest man, and the waterguard said the three oldest, and the two of them agreed that if ye would agree they themselves would agree to that. I'll be coming again, where I have to bring the plan ye will lay out, to put before the Board of Guardians that are sitting on this day, so soon as I'll put the tacklings on the horse. (*Goes.*)

Coppinger: I might be going to get my chance in the heel. Wait now till I'll lay my mind to it for a while.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what is your own mind, Brian Hosty, you that are my near neighbour and my most enemy? Show us now what the intellect and the wit of the Connacht man can do.

Hosty: I would not tell a lie for one or for two, and I declare now and nearly take my oath, that I to have my choice thing and the riches of Damer the Chandler, it is what I would wish, this little dry stone wall to be swept from this village where I live to my grief and my sorrow, and a ditch to be dug from the Shannon to the sea, would divide the two provinces, and would be wide enough and bulky enough to drown every

chattering word of the cranky women of Munster, and let me hear nothing but the sweet-voiced women of Connacht, from now to the womb of judgment.

Costello: Oh, now, Brian Hosty, that is a very unneighbourly way to be saying such unruly words, that wouldn't be said hardly by the poorest person would be walking the road.

Hosty: Tell out your own request so, and see will it give satisfaction, since you are so crabbed to be correcting myself.

Costello: I wouldn't like to be going against any person at all. I would sooner to leave it to a committee.

Hosty: So you would too, and you being every man's man. And its time for Coppinger to speak his mind, if his wife will but give him leave.

Coppinger: Every man to his trade—and I would like well to keep to my own trade—It is on stones my mind is dwelling and on rocks.

Mrs. Coppinger: Let you break up so and make an end of the rocks in the harbour where the Kerry men's hooker was broke up. To come against one of them it did, and never left it but in little sticks. A danger to ships they would be, and any ships to be coming in to the pier. They to be out of it, what would hinder ships coming in the way you could set out from this street to go to

America or around the world? You wanting some big thing to do, there you have it to your hand—The harbour of New York there beyond, and the harbour of Druim-na-Cuan to be here and the one ocean to be serving the two of them!

Hosty: (Laughing.) You have a great notion, Mrs. Coppinger what sort the harbour of New York is, and you thinking to make the like of it in this place, with sails and steamers drawing in from the world entirely, and the statue of Liberty standing up high before you.

(Malachi comes in and sits down at Peggy's door.)

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't there be a statue? A statue is a thing does be put in many a place. Sure you can see one to Saint Joseph, Protector of the souls in Purgatory, all the same as life across the bay.

Hosty: And Thomas Coppinger that is thinking to shape it out I suppose with his hammer, according as his fancy tells him what way it should be worked?

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't he shape it and he having a mind to shape it, and being well used as he is to handle every sort of stone?

Hosty: It is not of stone, statues do be made, but of iron would be rendered into a mould, the

same as sheep's tallow you would be rendering for candles.

Coppinger: I would never say iron to be as natural as stone, or as kind.

Costello: Plaster now would be very tasty and very suitable, and a shelter to be put over it. It would be no way so costly as iron.

Hosty: It is iron is more serviceable, and as to cost, the first expense would be the cheapest, the way it would be a good job, and not to turn against you after.

Costello: What would you say now to cement, and a good stand being under it?

Hosty: If it was a statue was to be made, it's an iron statue it should be.

Coppinger: And what way would you hoist it to its place? It would have the weight in it of the devil's forge.

Hosty: And what do you say to the weight of stone? Look at that slab of your own that has a hole wore through the street, and it but two year or so leaning towards the wall.

Coppinger: It has not a hole made, but to settle itself it did, against such time as it would be called for and be wanting.

Hosty: I to have an estate I would bet it, you would not be able to lift it or to stir it from the place it is standing at this minute.

Coppinger: I'll engage I would, and to throw it over the collar beam of the barn I would, the same as a sack of oats——

(They gather round headstone. Mannion comes in.)

Mannion: Did you make up your mind yet to say out what thing it is ye have settled, for me to bring word to the Board Room in the town?

Hosty: What way can we make our mind up till such time as we have a finish made of this argument?

Coppinger: Did you ever hear it said in any place, Peter Mannion, iron to be more answerable for an image than stone?

Costello: Wouldn't you say now, Peter, there is very lasting wear in cement?

Mannion: It is best for ye make your mind up. There are other old men in the district, and they getting older every minute.

Coppinger. Give me but the time to bring proof to Brian Hosty that there is no weight to signify in a slab of stone. *(Tries to lift it, and Hosty and Costello encourage him, with sarcastic applause.)*

Costello: All the strength you have wouldn't lift that flag.

Hosty: Lift it is it? If you were as strong as Finn MacCumhail you wouldn't lift it.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Dragging Darby away.*) You are a friendly man, Darby Costello, and always very liberal to do as I bid you, not like Brian that is stubborn—Let you settle an image to be made and be put up, and give the contract to Thomas—he is that greedy for work—and it would be a great thing for him rise out of headstones, and to get a decent job——

Costello: I'd be in dread of Brian Hosty going against me. He is always someway contrary, that you couldn't teach him manners.

Mrs. Coppinger: It would be handsome work for him, and who is nearer than a neighbour? It might put life in him that he would bring me away to America yet. But that to fail us we might as well close the door—You to give your vote for it, and Thomas to give it, that would be two against one.

Mannion: (*Turning from Hosty and Coppinger to Mrs. Coppinger.*) Will you tell me what at all is it they are arguing about?

(*Costello escapes and goes off.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: It is that they cannot agree what is the right material for to put in a statue.

Mannion: And is it a statue so, they have laid down as their choice thing and their plan?

Mrs. Coppinger: Darby Costello will tell you if it is. Where is he? Well, he has but a bad heart of courage. Why would they be making so much talk about it, they not to have made it their plan?

Mannion: I would say it to be a queer thing for them to lay their thoughts to, and a very queer thing—Let me keep now the messages in mind—Candles for the shop—Paraffin oil for the priest—a pair of boots for the clerk—the Board of Guardians to be told there is a statue to be put up with the profit of the oil of the whales—(*Goes off as Coppinger with a great effort upsets the stone, which falls with a crash.*)

Hosty: Do you call it lifting it to throw it down?

Coppinger: Wait a minute now till I'll strive secondly!—

Mrs. Coppinger: Thomas! It's time bring the mash to the cow—run Brian Hosty, there's a sheep of your sheep—unless it might be a stone—is lying on its back near its death—(*Brian jumps over wall.*)

Coppinger: But sure we made no settlement yet.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Shoving him into the house.*)
It's well for you to have some one to mind you
and to take care of you—Believe me, Thomas
Coppinger, you are going to get your chance!

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene same, but night time. Moonlight. Candle and firelight shining from the open half-door of Coppinger's house. Mrs. Coppinger heard singing within.

Malachi: (Coming down street.) The fall of night is come and I didn't find him yet. East and west I'll go searching for him, east and west—he to be in the hollow I'll be on the hill, he to be on the hill I'll be in the hollow!

Peggy: (Coming from her cabin with milk jug.) What is on you, Malachi Naughton, that you are running there and hither, as if there was one dead belonging to you?

Malachi: (Stops short.) It is long you are in this world, Peggy Mahon, and you knew a power of people from birth to age, and heard many histories. Tell me, now, did ever you know or did ever you hear tell of one Hugh O'Lorrha?

Peggy. What would ail me not to hear of him? Hugh O'Lorrha—Hugh Beg O'Lorrha.

Malachi: That is it, ma'am, you have it—I knew well you should have that knowledge, and with all the generations that passed before you in your time.

Peggy: (*Sits down near Mrs. Coppinger's door.*) I'd tell you out his story if I didn't think it too long to be keeping you on the soles of your feet while you'd be hearing it.

Malachi: Tell it out, tell it out! You to be telling me his story through the length of seven year, I wouldn't be tired listening to it.

Peggy: Ah, it's near gone from me. All such things are gone from me, with the dint of fretting after them that flew away.

Malachi: You cannot but tell it. It is through miracles his name was brought to this place. I tell you it was not brought without wonders.

Peggy: To leave his mother's house he did——

Malachi: So he would too. What would happen to the world the like of him to have stopped at home? He wasn't one would be sitting through the week the same as the police, having his feet in the ashes.

Peggy: Out fighting on the road he went——

Malachi: There were always good fighters in Ireland till this present time. The people have

no fight in them now worth while, so lagging they are grown to be and so liary.

Peggy: Fighting, fighting. To get into some trouble he did—it is hardly he escaped from the Naked Hangman——

Malachi: It is the Sassanach twisted the rope for him so. Terrible wicked they were, and God save us, I believe they are every bit as wicked yet. Go on, ma'am, sound it out. Well, it was the one hand sent the whales steering over the tide, and brought me here to yourself gathering newses.

Peggy: (*Crossly.*) Where is the milk, Mrs. Coppinger has me promised? I'll tell no more. There's too many striving to knock talk out of me, and the red tea stewing on the coals, and I myself weary and waiting for the drop of new milk. Is it coming out you are, Mrs. Coppinger?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*From inside.*) I'll have it now for you within one minute.

Malachi: They will mind me now, they will surely mind me now, when I tell them that name has to be put up. It is to myself the message was brought, Peggy Mahon, to put up the name of Hugh O'Lorrha, and to sound it in the ears of the entire world. Oh, there will be no fear from this out it will ever be disremembered again, or wither away from the mind of any person at all.

Peggy: Have you no one of your own to keep in mind, Malachi Naughton, that you should go battling for a name is no more to you than any other, and not to be content with your own dead?

Malachi: It is more to me than any other name. It is a name I would go walking the world for, without a shoe to my foot! And why would I do that for any common person, would be maybe as ugly as the people I do be seeing every day, and as cross and as crabbed? What call would I have going through hardship for a man would be no better maybe, and no better looking, than myself?

Peggy: What sort of a tribe are you sprung from, or of a poor mountainy race, that you would have no one of your own kindred or of your blood, would be worth remembering?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Who has been listening, coming to door.*) The doctor called death a shadow, and death called the doctor a shadow! Faith the two of ye put me in mind of the both of them, and you disputing and arguing, and neither of you owning a ha'porth worth arguing for, or a perch of land only the street, or so much as a stim of sense.

Malachi: Putting me down the whole of ye do be, and saying I know nothing; and I maybe as apt as the best of ye, and as wide awake. That

one counting her own dead in the one count with Hugh O'Lorrha. A man that robbed the apple from the hundreds! But his name will go up in spite of ye, if God has a hand in it!

Mrs. Coppinger: Leave arguing with him, Peggy, you might as well be talking with the wind. If you go fighting, can't you fight for things that are worth fighting for.

Peggy: Why would any person go set their mind upon the hither side of the grave, and not upon the far side? I have seen them come and seen them go, the scores and the hundreds, the same as if they came on a visit to a neighbour's house, and went from it again the time their clothes would be wore out and tattered. And the skin to be wore into rags, the soul is the one thing always, for it was the breath of God put into Adam, and it is the possession of God ever since. I know well where my own man is living yet, and where I will come to him when the Lord will send for me.

Mrs. Coppinger: It is hard know that. Any man that goes to punishment doesn't come back to tell his story, and in Heaven I suppose they keep a fast hold of them too. This world's the best to keep your eye on. Who knows will we see them again, or will we care much about it if we do see them? It would be best for you have

taken another comrade in your bloom, in place of always lamenting him that is gone, and you without one to close your eyes the time you'll die, or the help of a man in the house, and without a son or a daughter in all Ireland.

Peggy: You never laid an eye on Patrick Mahon, or never lived next or near him, and you saying that. The parting of us two was the parting of the body with the soul. I tell you there never set his foot on the floor of the world, and never told his secret to a woman, so good a man. Where would I find, east or west, the like of him of a comrade? The time he wanted me, and some were again it, we gave one another a hard promise to let no person at all come between us or separate us. And after he going they had a match made for me with some man they were bringing into the house. But I said I never would rear a son to rubbish, and I drove them out. (*She rises.*) And if I was glad to get a dry potato at some times, and a bit of Indian meal itself in the scarce July, I have my promise kept. Why would I take a man, I said, and my comrade sleeping with no woman?

Mrs. Coppinger: That's not the way with me, but I would sooner have some one to care and to nourish, than to be looking after a shadow you would have no way to be serving, but maybe with an odd prayer or a Mass, and that never might be

aware maybe were you thinking about him or remembering him at all.

Peggy: It's likely he knows, though I never saw him since, and never had a sign or a vision from him, and it's often I went out looking for him at the fall of day. Never a sign or a vision, but often and often he came across me in my sleep. Waiting for him I do be till such time as I will come to him, where the Almighty has a very good place of His own. (*Goes towards her own door.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: You might come to him, maybe—but it is hard to be sure of it, and what way can you know?

Peggy: (*Turning.*) What way can I know is it? I can give you God's bail for it.

Mrs. Coppinger: There can be no bail better than that—But to get to our dead itself, it is not likely they would know us or recognise us, and the length of the years does be between us.

Peggy: Don't be saying that! Don't be putting that word out of your mouth! How dare you be putting your own bad thoughts between myself and my decent comrade?

Mrs. Coppinger: I didn't think you would be so much vexed I to say that. Here now is the drop of milk is warm from the cow yet.

Peggy: (Throwing it out of her jug.) I will not take it or take anything at all from your hand, and you after striving to rob me of my hope. I tell you, that to be gone from me, my heart would break, that is wore to a silk thread. He not to know me is it? Oh, Patrick! Oh, my grief! and maybe it might be so. For what am I but a bent crooked hag, withering through the world, and you yourself being, as I think, one of the fair-haired boys of Heaven! *(Goes in and shuts door.)*

(Mrs. Coppinger goes into her house. Coppinger and Costello come in. Coppinger crosses to his own door.)

Coppinger: Well, now the hurry of the day is over, we can settle our minds to the choice we have to make for laying out the benefit of the whales. *(Sitting down and taking hat off.)*

Costello: (Sitting down.) We'll get more fair play making a plan, and Brian Hosty not being in it, to be running down and ridiculing every word at all we will say.

Coppinger: Ah, that is but a way he has, and a habit of his habits, to be running down every Munster person, and to be drawing his own province upon us. He to be cross, it is that the generations were cross before him.

Costello: I don't know are we any way fitted to be taking such a load upon our shoulders at all.

Coppinger: Why wouldn't we be fitted? A man that has the gift, will get more out of his own brain than another man will by learning, and there's many a man without learning will get the better of a college bred man, and will have better luck too. It's a great plan we will be making and a great story and a great sound through the whole ring of Ireland.

(Hosty comes in, gloomily.)

Costello: We were just waiting for you, Brian Hosty, till we'd start talking in earnest about the spending of the profit of the whales.

(Mrs. Coppinger comes and stands at window, listening.)

Hosty: It's a great deal of talk you are wishful to be making. I tell you, ye have done enough of talking.

Costello: Ah, don't be so cross now! A person to be cross it would scare me.

Hosty: It is the chat of the both of ye, and your talking, has caused the appearance of fools to be put upon us and upon the whole of the headland, with the plan ye made up, and that ye sent unknownst to myself to the Board Room.

Coppinger: Sure we made no choice at all yet and no plan. We didn't begin hardly to argue the matter yet.

Hosty: Who was it sent word to the Board of Guardians so, that the three best men of the point of Druim-na-cuan had their mind made up—for the benefit of the whole parish and its gain—to lay out the riches cast up by the sea into their hand, on no other thing than a—statue!

Costello and Coppinger: (*Standing up.*) A statue!

Coppinger: Sure we had no intention at all of putting up a statue. Only conversing about such articles we were.

Costello: (*Seeing Mrs. Coppinger make a sign to him.*) It is likely Peter Mannion took in earnest the little argument we were going on with, and that Brian Hosty himself was the first to start.

Coppinger: So he was, with his mention of the Statue of Liberty that is up above the harbour of New York.

Hosty: Let Peter Mannion, that is coming up the street, be put upon his oath, till he'll say out who was it was seeking a job for himself, making mention of an image that would be cut out of stone.

Coppinger: I was not seeking a job! I said, supposing there to be a statue wanted, stone would answer it best. I only said, "supposing."

Costello: Sure it is only supposing the whole of us were. We were not meaning anything at all.

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) I am after coming back from the Board Room. The plan you have made for the benefit of the headland was put before the Guardians. To give consent to it they were asked, and a grant if the means would run short.

Coppinger: And is it a fact now, it was said before the Board that the plan we had laid out was for a statue?

Mannion: Why wouldn't it, when that was what the three of ye had agreed?

Hosty: The three of us! Glory be to God! And all the world knowing we are three men that never could agree!

Costello: My dearest life! And what now did the Guardians say hearing that?

Mannion: They said it was a very nice thought, no better, and a very good thing to do.

Hosty: They said that, is it?

Costello: The Lord protect and save us!

Mannion: Themselves or the Rural Council—I'm not rightly sure between them—will send a commission on next Friday, that is a holy-day, to take a view of the site, and to lay the foundation stone. Speeches there will be, they bringing a

member of Parliament purposely, and a meeting with banners and with bands.

Coppinger: And no one in the place fit to put up the monument but myself! Wouldn't that be enough of a story to put upon the headstone of any man at all? Didn't I know well it was a miracle brought the whales, the way I would get my chance!

Mannion: The Guardians are wishful to know the name is to be put upon the statue.

Coppinger: The name is it?

Mannion: The name to be sure of the patriot it will be made in the similitude of, and the shape.

Hosty: The patriot!

Costello: It's a statue of Liberty Brian Hosty was talking about in the commencement.

Mannion: Ah, who the hell cares about liberty? It is what the Board made sure you had the name chosen of some good man. Word I have to send them by the post-car will be passing at break of day. (*Goes off up street.*)

Hosty: And in what place in the wide world are we to go looking for the name of a good man?

Malachi: (*Rises and comes to them.*) Is it what ye are going to do, to put up the name of some big man?

Costello: It is, and his image along with it.

Malachi: You need not go far looking for that. It is I myself am able to give you a name is worth while. As if blown away on the wind it was, till it was brought back this day, with messengers were not common messengers, but strange. You may believe me telling you he is the fittest man.

Coppinger: Who might he be so, and where is he presently?

Malachi: He not to be out of the world what would he want with miracles? He to be in it at this time wouldn't he be well able to cut a way for himself and ask no help from anyone at all.

Coppinger: Tell us out who was he so?

Malachi: A man he was that left his mother's house where he was reared, and went out fighting on the roads of the world.

Coppinger: There is many a one did that in the last seven hundred years. It was maybe following after Sarsfield he went, and the Limerick Treaty broken?

Malachi: It was out against the English he went——

Hosty: A '98 man maybe?

Malachi: It is hardly he escaped from the Naked Hangman——

Costello: No, but a '48 man. There was few that escaped in '98.

Coppinger: It's often their story wasn't put down right by the illiterate people in the old time. Tell out his name now till we'll see what do we know about it.

Malachi: A great name, a great name will go sounding through the world. It is I myself got the charge to bring it to mind. Though my clothes are poor my story is high! Did ever any of ye hear till to-day the name of Hugh O'Lorrha?

Hosty: I never did. I think it is but foolish talk he is giving out, that we are fools ourselves listening to.

Costello: I never heard it, I think—or maybe I did hear it.

Coppinger: It is not to a mountainy man it would be left to make that name known, and it being the name of any big man. And I myself never hearing it at all. (*Goes and sits at his own door.*)

Hosty: It is down from the mountains the whole country is destroyed, so wild and so unruly as ye do be, and so ready to give an opinion on everything in the world wide. (*He sits down at Peggy's door.*)

Costello: (*To Hosty.*) Light in the head he does be, every time there is a twist in the moon. It's best for him go back to the hillside.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*At door.*) Innocent he always was, and where there is innocence there is ignorance. To speak to him at all would bother you, as much as it would bother himself.

Hosty: Laying down to us he is, to put our statue up to one Hugh O'Lorrha.

Mrs. Coppinger: Ah sure, he has my arm blackened with the dint of the pinches he gave me a while ago, striving to drive that story into my head, and he cherishing a bit of a board, and it squz up to his chest.

Coppinger: Tell me this, Mary, you that have that much songs a horse wouldn't carry the load of them, did you meet in ere a verse of them with the name of Hugh O'Lorrha?

Malachi: She did not to be sure. His name to be in a song, what would he want with stones or with monuments? Wouldn't any man at all be well satisfied, his name to be going through the generations in a song. My grief that I haven't the wit to make a poem for him or a ballad, and it is a great pity I am not prone to versify!

Hosty: Ah, that one would keep you talking till the clear light of day! Go leave us now, where we have business to be thinking of.

Malachi: (*Going to corner.*) It is laid down for him his name to be put up. It is *for* him I say. (*Sits upon a stone.*)

Hosty: Come now and make our settlement with no more delay. There being a statue to be put up in this place, and the whole fleet of guardians and councillors and members of Parliament wanting to get knowledge of the name we will put on it, who now is the most man to be respected, and to be done honour to, of all that ever came out of Ireland? What is your opinion now, Darby Costello, if you have any opinion at all?

Costello: Don't be laying it on me now. I'm in dread I wouldn't find a name would be pleasant to every person, and that would give no offence in any place. Let you ask Mrs. Coppinger, that it is given in to to be the best singer in this place, and that has the praise of every man ever got praises in her songs.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's easy say who is the best man.

Costello: (*With a sigh.*) It is not easy, but hard.

Mrs. Coppinger (*sings*)—

“His life and liberty he risked both here and everywhere,

Both slander and prison he suffered his own share,

I'm sure he loved all Ireland, 'tis admitted near and far

He would have gained a fortune just at the Irish Bar!”

Costello: Good woman!

Hosty: Rise it, ma'am, rise it!

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Coming a step forward*)—

“The foes of Ireland, well 'tis known he often
made them quail,
With eloquence like thunder he defended Gran-
uaile,
You may talk of Wellington and the battles
that he won,
But in all that he deserved was nothing to what
O'Connell done!”

Costello: Very good! That's the chat now!
“But in all he deserved was nothing to what
O'Connell done!”

Coppinger: He had a gift of sweetness on the
tongue. Whatever cause he took in hand it was
as good as gained.

Hosty: The best man within the walls of the
world he was. He never led anyone astray.

Mrs. Coppinger: What wonder in that, he
being as he was the gift of God. Wasn't Ennis
the best town in the thirty-two counties of Ireland,
sending him to Parliament the time his own place
had him put out?

Costello: (*Sings.*) “In the year '47 we laid
him in Glasnevin.”—I'm no songster like Mrs.
Coppinger.

Mrs. Coppinger: To throw out the poison from his cup he did, the time there was death lurking in it. The English that put it within in it, because he was a pious man. I seen his picture in a book one time. I give you my word I kissed it there and then.

Coppinger: His picture! No, but I that saw himself one time in Galway. I couldn't get anear him, all the nations of the world were gathered there to see him.

Costello: Sure I seen him myself, it was the greatest thing ever I saw. He drove through the streets very plain, and an oiled cap on him, and he having but the one horse.

Hosty: No, but seven horses in his coach he had the day I saw him. They couldn't get in the eighth.

Coppinger: Oh, it's a great image and a great monument I will shape out for him the dear man——

Costello: So you will! And he having one hand resting on a post, and a paper having Repeal on it held up to his chest.

Mrs. Coppinger: No, but Emancipation that should be on the paper. There is no other man that could be put beside him at all.

Costello: That is settled now and well settled. That is a great satisfaction, there to be no quarrel-

ling or no argument. It is a very nice thing, Brian Hosty, you to be no way thorny or disagreeable, but content and satisfied to be putting up a monument to a Munster man.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what objection could he urge against a Munster man, and he being worthier and more honourable than any man of the other provinces of Ireland?

Hosty: I am not giving in to that.

Costello: You are giving in to it, as is right for you to do. Every person seeing the image put up will know that you were of the one mind and the one opinion with ourselves, and you giving your voice for our man.

Hosty: I to be as wise then as I am now, I would not have given in to you, or given you occasion to be running down my province, and giving the branch to your own.

Mrs. Coppinger. And where would you find now any sort of a hero in Connacht would give satisfaction far and near, and have his name up as good as the men of Munster? Dan O'Connell, Smith O'Brien, Brian Boru, O'Sullivan Bere——

Hosty: Ah, we heard enough of that old string of heroes in the time that is past. They are all done away with now, and what is left of the best of them but a little fistful of bones? It's the champions of Connacht are battling yet. Let

the statue be put up to some living man and where is Munster?

Costello: What way would you put up a monument to a living man, and some traitors maybe turning against him in the latter end, and running him down?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Coming over to Coppinger.*) Do not put your hand, Thomas, to a likeness of any living man at all, and his neighbours to be coming and criticising it, saying it would not resemble his features or his face.

Hosty: Dead or living I've no mind to give my voice for any man was bred in Munster. You're a proud piece, Mrs. Coppinger, and you think you have got the better of me, but if O'Connell himself did his work fair enough, there were *some* in your province didn't turn out too well the time Cromwell was on the road, and to the day of my death I will never put praises on one of their district.

(*Coppinger jumps up angrily.*)

Costello: (*Stopping him.*) Wait now till we'll think of some person would answer the two of ye— There is one was not from the west or from the south, that was Parnell. There are some say he was the best man ever lived.

Coppinger: He was not, but O'Connell was the best, that wore his hat in the House of Commons what no man but the King can do.

Hosty: If Parnell didn't wear his hat in it, he fought a good fight in it.

Coppinger: If it wasn't for O'Connell there would be no members in the English Parliament at all would be Catholics!

Hosty: If there wouldn't, there'd be no Catholic judges on the Bench, calling out for coercion and to do away with juries!

Costello: It's best for ye agree to Parnell. I'm told if he had held out and kept up, he would have got the second best match in England.

Hosty: He did more than any other man I tell you, and he to have lived till now Ireland would be different to what it is.

Mrs. Coppinger: Let you not agree to him, Coppinger. Sure I had his picture on the wall and I took it down after, the priest thinking it did not look well to be hanging where it was.

Costello: Ah, they have but the one thing against him, and how do we know but that was a thing appointed by God?

Malachi: (*Suddenly coming between them.*) Look now at the fighting and quarrelling and the slander-ing is sent among ye, the way ye will be made give in to my own choice man. If you didn't give in to him at the first, you'll be druv to give in to him secondly! A shining image of silver I will see put

up, and the words will be on it worked with red gold.

Hosty: The devil bother you, Malachi, a poor foolish creature the like of you, to be interrupting our talk.

Coppinger: Let you go in from under that moon that does be making your mind take a flight, till the worst thing you'll be saying you'll think it to be the best.

Malachi: Let you not be belittling me! I tell you I wouldn't give the weight of that little board in my hand, for all that's on the headland of Druim-na-cuan!

Coppinger: Pup, pup, Malachi, we have manners and were brought up to manners, and you have none.

Malachi: I tell you there's three quarters of the world is not good enough to be drowned!

Coppinger: No, but there are some have a tongue as bad as Judas had a heart, and that is bad enough.

Malachi: Keep your own tongue off me so! It is what you are a bully, and the captain of all the bullies!

Mrs. Coppinger: What is ailing you? Be mannerly in your anger anyway. Yourself and your Hugh O'Lorrha, that was maybe some sort

of an idolator or a foreigner, that went breaking all the commandments!

Malachi: Whatever he was I'd go to the north side of hell for seven year for him! The whole fleet of ye together are not worth the smallest rib of his hair!

Hosty: In my opinion he was an innocent or a fool the same as yourself, or you would not be infatuated with him the way you are!

(All laugh.)

Malachi: That will be a dear laugh to you! Is it defaming the character ye are of my darling man? But I'll put terror on ye! I'll give you a clout will knock your head as solid as any stone in the wall! *(Flourishes board.)*

Coppinger: Lay down that stick, you miserable imp!

Malachi: I'll strike a blow with it will split bits off a rock. You big turkey gobbler you! Come on till I'll make a great scatter of you! *(They close round him seizing board.)* Death and destruction, but I'm as strong as you! *(He falls in the scuffle.)*

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it to kill him you did?

Coppinger: Not a kill in the world, but the senses that is knocked out of him.

The Image

Hosty: If it wasn't that there is luck with a fool, he'd be done for.

Mannion: (Coming in.) Let ye stand back now. What call had you to go charging at him, and bearing him to the ground?

Costello: No, but himself that came rushing into handigrips with us, the same as horned cattle in a field.

Mrs. Coppinger: It is bleeding in the head he is, with the sharpness of the stone he fell on; there is not much happened him beyond that.

Coppinger: It's best lay him in the hooker below is just making a start for Ballyvaughan. To leave him in the infirmary ere morning they can, till such time as he will come around. Try now can you rise up, Malachi.

(He is helped up, and Mannion and Mrs. Coppinger lead him towards pier.)

Malachi: (Calling out as he goes.) Time is a good story-teller! Ye will do the business for me yet, till his name will be sung through the seven kingdoms! What is allotted cannot be blotted. It is for him I say—it is for him. *(He is led off.)*

Costello: It is a pity he to have made that disturbance, and we being so pleasant and so peaceable together.

Coppinger: We have time enough yet to make another choice. We didn't go through the saints of Ireland yet, or the seventeen kings of Burren.

Hosty: Where's the use of calling it a choice, and I having two contrary men against me. Any time I will strive to get the goal for my own man, the two of ye will join to put me down.

(Mrs. Coppinger and Mannion come back.)

Costello: It is a pity neighbours to be going contrary to one another. "Let ye be at one," Biddy Early said, "and ye will rule the world." It would be right to bring the whole case to a closure, and not to be hitting and striking and calling "Hi" for one, or "Hi" for another, the same as if it was a disputed election was in it.

Mrs. Coppinger: I saw a very wicked election in Ennis one time, and I rising. That was before there came in the voting by ballot.

Costello. You are a great woman for thoughts, Mrs. Coppinger, and that is a thought will settle all. What would ail us not to give our votes by ballot? There would be no room then for disputing, the choice being over and made, fair and quiet, and without favour or intimidation.

Coppinger: And where will you get ballot boxes and voting papers, and a courthouse, and two men sitting in it with themselves, and the

voters writing—if they can write—and shouting out if they cannot, the name of their own man?

Costello: What signifies clerks and papers? What do you say now to Peter Mannion? It is what we'll do, to come up to him and tell him secretly the name we have our mind made up to; and he to tell out after who has the benefit of the votes.

Mannion: (*Coming forward.*) Let ye all fall back so, and not to be putting ears on yourselves, but to draw anear me one by one.

Coppinger: That's it, and you yourself to be standing stark and quiet, the same as the image will be standing there in the time to come, and we to go west as far as the rick of turf——

Mannion: (*Standing stiffly.*) Whatever champion of the champions of Ireland ye think to be the most worthy and the most fitting to have his name put up, let ye tell it out here to me privately. And that being done, I will make my count, and tell out after who is it has gained the day.

Coppinger: That's business now. And which now of the three of us is to be the first to give his own vote?

Mrs. Coppinger: It is Peter Mannion is well able to settle that, and he being used to society, and the meetings at the union.

Mannion: Let ye come so according to the letters of your name—A, B, C, C, Coppinger—or Costello—C o Coppinger C o Costello, it isn't easy say which of the two of ye has to go first.

Costello: Let it be Thomas so. I'd be someway shy and delicate to be called in at the start. Thomas the first, and I myself will follow after.

(They all go out of sight. Mrs. Coppinger goes into house.)

Mannion: Come on, so, Thomas Coppinger, and give out your vote, according to your opinion and your conscience and your choice.

Coppinger: *(Coming in and speaking to Mannion confidentially with hand to mouth.)* It is what I am thinking, Peter Mannion, there is truth in what herself was saying a while ago. It is a hard thing to be asked to go make a likeness of a man, and his appearance to be known before. And the people to be criticising, now they have got to be so crafty and so enlightened. But a man not to have his appearance known, you would have leave to put on him any shape that might be pleasing to yourself, or that would come handy, according as the stone would be slippery or be kind. Now every person knows, by pictures, or by seeing them, or by history from one to another, the features of Parnell and of Daniel O'Connell——

Mannion: Hurry on now. It is not sitting hearing a sermon in the chapel I am, and in dread of the Missioners to go slip out from the door.

Coppinger: Did ever you hear now any person to have seen a picture or a likeness of Malachi Naughton's man?

Mannion: I cannot bring to mind that ever I did.

Coppinger: I give my voice and my vote so for Hugh O'Lorrha. (*Goes into his house.*)

Mannion: Come on now and draw near to me, Darby Costello.

Costello: (*Coming close to Mannion.*) It is often I was saying, Peter Mannion, unfriendliness among neighbours to be a very awkward thing. I never would be asking to rise a dispute, or to bring any person into one at all.

Mannion: Is it through the dark hours of the night you are wishful to keep me perishing in the air that is of the nature of frost and of sleet?

Costello: (*Seizing his arm.*) It's easy seen you are not living in this village, Peter Mannion, or within three fields of it. If I say Dan O'Connell, Brian Hosty will be making attacks on me, and if I say Parnell, Mrs. Coppinger will be picking at me and going on at me, and maybe putting up Thomas to be mis-spelling my name, and he print-

ing it on the head-piece he has me promised at the last——

Mannion: (Shaking him off.) I give you my word I'll leave you here and now, to be giving out your reasoning to the seals and to the gulls of the air.

Costello: (Holding him.) It is impossible to say what men would be best, and good and bad being together in the whole of them. And all I would wish is the name of some man that never gave offence, and had ne'er an enemy worth while—and it's likely that would be the mountainy man's choice, Hugh O'Lorrha.

(He goes off.)

Mannion: Come on now, Brian Hosty, and let me go out of this.

Hosty: (Coming in.) There are some on this headland want to get the master hand—*(Points towards Coppinger's door.)* Himself and his fire-ball!

Mannion: Hurry on now.

Hosty: To give them too much of a scope, and not to give them a check, it would be impossible to live anear them. It would be worse they to be in power than Martin Luther.

Mannion: Don't be delaying, but see can you agree with the two that are agreed at this time.

The Image

Hosty: They to have agreed, it is some plan they have made to get the mastery over myself and over Connacht. I never told a lie but two or three, and you may believe me saying, that if there were two hundred Dan O'Connells, and twenty thousand Mr. Parnells, and a sovereign in their hands for every vote I'd vote, I'd give it to none of them, but to a man I'm sure and certain sure Darby or Thomas, or his wife, never gave out a challenge for, and never blew the horn for, and that is the fool's man, Hugh O'Lorrha!

Mannion: (Beckoning the others in.) Let ye draw near to me now. Come up here Mrs. Coppinger, till I'll count out the returns. By the opinion, and the judgment, of the three fairest men, and the three choice men of Druim-na-cuan, and they voting together the same as children of one house, without deceit or trickery, the image is to be reared on this headland is to stand for the honour and the memory and for the great name and the fame of Hugh O'Lorrha!

All. Hugh O'Lorrha!

(They raise their hands in astonishment, and look at one another.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene: same as before. Four days later, mid-day.

Mrs. Coppinger putting out chairs and a table and sweeping. Costello looking on.

Costello: It is certain this will be a great meeting of people, and a grand white day for the headland of Druim-na-cuan. I would want a slate and a pencil to count all I saw coming the road.

Mrs. Coppinger: Isn't it a big hurry is on them, to ask to come laying the stone for the monument, and it never mentioned or thought of at all up to four days ago.

Costello: Sure at that time the whales had the last puff hardly gone out of them.

Mrs. Coppinger: What way are the whales presently? I thought to go see them but it failed me, and the neighbours from all parts drawing in for talk every whole minute.

Costello: It was the one way with myself, I didn't get the time to draw anear them. It is what Thomas was saying, next Monday maybe, with the help of God, we'll go start drawing off the oil.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Dusting a chair.*) That now is all the chairs they can get. Sure they could not all expect to be seated, and they coming in their hundreds. There is not a west of Ireland man will not be in it.

Costello: Indeed, ma'am, you have accommodated them very well with everything. It's well for them get a place to stand itself. From all I hear, and they congregated, it would fail you to put a pin between any two and two or any twelve and a dozen. Pressing to hear the speeches they will be. They are saying the Chairman of the Board to be a very solid speaker.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's the member for North Munster is the best. Grand out and out he is, and has very tasteful drawn out talk. The reporters themselves couldn't follow it or put the half of it down.

Costello: (*Looking out over wall.*) Tents and booths they are setting up upon the strand. Glory be to God, it's like a theatre to be looking at them arriving. They were waiting for the turn of the spring-tide. You were craving sprints this long time, Mrs. Coppinger, and it is with pride you are apt to be spending this day.

(*Malachi comes in from left, his head tied up, and his arm.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: And who now would be the first to come to the meeting but Malachi Naughton! And indeed it is much like a ghost he is looking, that would knock a start out of you, or a shadow would be wandering through the world.

Malachi: (*Looking about on the ground.*) It is there I left it down. I'm certain it is in that spot I left it out of my hand.

Mrs. Coppinger: What way did they do a cure on you in the Workhouse, Malachi? Bet up I was fearing you were, and that it's hardly you would be eating this world's bread again.

Malachi: Just battled it out I did—just battled it out— Did ye see in any place my bit of a board I used to have?

Mrs. Coppinger. I did not see it, unless it might be thrust as kindling in under the turf on the hearth.

Malachi: Isn't that a hard case now, my bit of a board to be robbed from me, and it after being brought to me over the ocean and all the dangers of the sea, and having on it the name you know. That to be swept away from me, I am penetrated and tossed.

Mrs. Coppinger: You to burn the house down it's not likely you would find it. But you may quit fretting and breaking your heart, for if it is the name of Hugh O'Lorrha you are craving

to see, you will see it in a short while printed in clean letters beneath the soles of his feet, and his own image reared up in this spot all the same as life, in the shape will be put upon him by my own man, according to the pictures and the plan are to come to us from Dublin on this day.

Malachi: I heard that, I heard that. I knew well his name would be put up in spite of ye. But it's for the whole world that will be, and they coming from the east and from the west to do honour to him; and he might take it bad of me, I to go lose that little bit of a board.

Mrs. Coppinger: You heard of all was doing so far away as the Workhouse Infirmary? Isn't it a great wonder now tidings to go out so speedy and so swift.

Malachi: It was in every person's mouth ere last night, in the ward where I was screeching with the pain, and the doctors after taking the full of a bucket of badness out of my bones. As much blood nearly came away from me as would be in three men. But I rose up after hearing that news.

Mrs. Coppinger: I wonder they to have let you out and the way you are, that you couldn't hardly put a rack through your hair.

Malachi: (*Sits on chair beside the table.*) I asked no leave. I slipped out in the half dark at

the battling of the day with the night. The road to be seventeen times as long, I wouldn't feel it. I tell you I was that strong I could walk on water, my heart being light and airy the way it is with the thought of his name being put up and his image, that will be shining out as bright as stars on a frosty night, and all the whole country pressing to look at it.

Mrs. Coppinger: It isn't likely it is shining it will be, it would take marble would be rubbed for to shine, and the hardness of that would not serve Thomas's tools. And the colour of it wouldn't answer either, the spotted or the black. It is likely he was a man having a white front to his shirt—I wonder now is it swarthy he was or red-haired?

Malachi: It is I myself could give you knowledge of that.

Mrs. Coppinger: What way could you have knowledge, and he being dead?

Malachi: God be with the company that left me in the night time!

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it to see one belonging to him, or that had acquaintance with him you did?

Malachi: I'd burst if I didn't tell it! A cross-cut I was making that was eight strong miles across the mountain, and I was travelling down

a little avenue of stones by the forth that was all shining with the brightness of the night—More people I saw in it than ever I saw at a hurling, and I'd ask no better sight than that in high Heaven.

Mrs. Coppinger: Where now did all that company come from?

Malachi: More people than ever I saw in twenty fairs. And beyond that I saw twelve of the finest horses ever I saw, and riders on them racing around the forth. Many a race I saw since I lived in this world, but for tipping, and tugging, and welting the horses, never a race like that—and there was a rider of those riders without a twist in him—at the first there was like a fog about him——

Mrs. Coppinger: Ah, it is but visions of the night you are talking about; or your sight that spread on you. It was but the shadow of some soul you saw, or people that are out of this world. Or maybe it is dreaming you were, and you stepping out through your sleep.

Malachi: (*Getting up.*) Take care but it was no dream! Let you go out looking yourself so in the night time. And if you do go, it is likely you will see nothing but the flaggy rocks and the clefts, for it's not all are born to see things of the kind. I'll tell you no more, I wish I had told

you nothing, and I wish I didn't lose my little bit of a board! (*Goes into Coppinger's house looking for it on the ground.*)

Coppinger: (*Coming in.*) Well, I have brought you tidings you will wonder at, and that will raise and comfort your heart!

Mrs. Coppinger: There is nothing would make me wonder after all happened in these days past. I to rise up in the morning under lofty rafters in Boston, I give you my word I'd take it as simple as a chicken would be hatched out of the shell!

Coppinger: (*Sits on table.*) Did ever you hear the name of a Hosty or a Costello or my own name, that is as good as their own through the father, besides any flight it might take with the mother, to be put up on the papers with praises around and about them.

Mrs. Coppinger: Why would they be put up on the papers with praises? I never heard of Brian or Darby no more than yourself, ever to have been brought before the magistrates, or to have put his head inside a gaol?

Costello: Who was telling you?

Coppinger: The Dispensary Doctor that stopped his side-car on the road, and the driver of the mail car, and *he* would tell no lie, and Morrissey is herding for Cunningham, and that

was bringing back a score of lambs from the market at Cloon.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what account were they giving of what was on the papers?

Coppinger: Three honourable men, the papers said we were, that showed respect where respect should be showed. A pattern and an example for all Ireland they said we were, the nut of the bunch, the flower of Druim-na-cuan and the clean wheat of the Gael!

Costello: Do you tell me so?

Coppinger: And more than that again, the Board of Guardians gave out a great lacerating to all the rest of the Unions of the two provinces, where they had never stretched a hand to raise up the memory, or so much as to change the address on a street, to the great high up name of Hugh O'Lorrha!

Mrs. Coppinger: That is very good. Believe me, there is not a Board or a Board Room west of the Shannon, but will have a comrade cry sent out between this and the Feast of Pentecost.

Coppinger: I ask you, Mary, and I ask the two of you, did you often hear me saying I would surely get my chance?

Costello: I wonder now you to have courage to go think yourself fitted to make a figure of a champion all the world will be coming to see.

Coppinger: I'm no way daunted or turning my back upon the work! I tell you if it was three statues was wanted, of the three sons of Usnach, or the three Manchester martyrs, or the three saints of Burren, MacDuagh, MacDara and Columcille, it's ready I'd be and greedy I'd be to set my hand to the work!

Hosty: (Coming in with rolls of paper, going to seat outside Peggy's door.) I got the pictures from the Clerk of the Union where he sent for them to Dublin. Two able lads that drew them he was telling me, that have laid their mind to sketching as their trade.

Coppinger: They should be very apt and very handy, making so little delay in putting down a thing of the kind.

Mrs. Coppinger: (Opening one roll.) Wait now till we'll take a view of them before the meeting will gather about them. *(Unrolls it and shows conventional design for statue of an orator.)*

Costello: That is very nice now and very good.

Coppinger: (Feebly.) It wouldn't be an easy job now, any person to come around the like of

that. Wait till we'll see the comrade, is it any way more simple and more plain.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Opens it.*) It is mostly the same as the other, but for having on it a cloak in place of a coat.

Coppinger: It's a queer thing, now, not to get a picture laid down by some skilled person would be used to going through stone, and not to be leaving it to the fancies of young pups of boys rising up.

Hosty: It would be hard to beat it. Grand out and out it is. But sure the both of them are great. They were very smart surely to make a picture of the sort, without a button left out or a ha'porth. But it's you yourself, I am thinking, that is in dread it will fail you to carry through the job.

Coppinger: I give you my word the one of them would be as light to me as what the other would be. I am asking no reprieve from the work. But the ancient monuments that were the best, such as you'd see in the Abbey beyond, where the hero didn't ask to be put upon his two feet, but was content to lie stretched the way you might be lying on a bed, and you not seeking sleep.

Hosty: Shove over that box, Darby, and hold up the one of them—(*Costello hangs one back and*

front from his neck and gets up on box.) That now is the way it will be—And it is not yourself, Thomas, will have the choice to make this time. It is the Board itself will keep that in their hands.

Costello: (Standing on box.) That is best, it would be a great load on us to have to do that part of the job. It is easy for themselves, that are used to be judging between contracts and tenders and the like.

Hosty: It's not so easy as you think.

Costello: I tell you they have good practice in their business, settling and pitching as they must between the choice and the cull.

Hosty: One of the lads is nephew to the member for North Munster.

Costello: Let them give him the proffer so.

Hosty: By the two mothers, the second of the lads is first cousin to the Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Costello: Let them choose the two of them so, and put them back to back—It might be settled into some sort of a groove that it could be shoved from side to side—(*Turns slowly round on box.*) It to revolve, there would be no aspersion.

Mannion: (Coming in.) I was bid see is all ready for the big men are on the road, with their side-cars and with their band.

Mrs. Coppinger: Let them come now and welcome. We have all ready before them. The table, the chairs, the stone is to be made a hole for, and the pictures.

Mannion: It is what I was bid to ask, is the writing made out, is to be put at the butt of the statue?

Coppinger: The writing is it? .

Mannion: That's it. The name and the date of Hugh O'Lorrha's birth, and the place he was reared, and the length of his years, and the deeds he has done. Write me out a docket now having that put down upon it clear and plain.

Hosty: Let Thomas Coppinger do that.

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't he do it, and you yourself being illiterate and not able to put down your mind on paper?

Hosty: I am not illiterate, but as well aware of things as yourself. But he that is used to be putting such things over the bones of the whole of the district, the pen should be light in his hand as is natural, and should be kind.

Coppinger: Not at all, but every man that comes to be buried that gives me the years and the names. I have enough to do after, bringing them within their scope on the slab. It isn't easy keep them from running around the edges. Let Brian Hosty put it down himself.

Hosty: It never was my trade to be spilling out words on paper, the same as a poet or a clerk. It is Darby Costello has practice, where he was forced by the police to print his name and dwelling-place on the shaft of his ass-car, ere last year.

Costello: Ah, let me alone, I'm in dread I might not do it in a way would satisfy all that are coming.

Coppinger: Ah, what are you wanting to put down? His christened name we have, and the name of his family and his tribe, and that is more than was wrote down of some of the world's great men, such as Homer that spoke Greek and never wrote a lie.

Mannion: It is likely that will not be enough. Reporters that were asking in the town, what place was Hugh O'Lorrha born.

Coppinger: You should know that, Brian Hosty, where your memory has no burdens on it like my own.

Hosty: I forget it as good as yourself.

Mannion: Well, who is it has the whole account? Sure it must have been written down at some time, in a history or in a testament.

Costello: Who would have it but Malachi Naughton? He'll remember us of it.

Hosty: Come out here, Malachi, you're wanting.

Malachi: (*Coming out of house.*) What is it you are wanting of me?

Coppinger: Give out now, Malachi, if you can give it, the deeds and the greatness of the man is to be set up on a stone in this spot.

Mannion: Ah, it is likely it is little he knows or can tell about him at all.

Malachi: Why wouldn't I know about him, and I after seeing him with my two eyes?

Coppinger: Is it to see him you are saying you did?

Malachi: Clear and plain I saw him in the night time. If I didn't why would my heart leap up with him the way it does?

Coppinger: Is it with yourself you were, seeing him?

Malachi: I have no witnesses but the great God and myself. Crowds and crowds of people I saw. Men like jockeys that were racing—and one that was the leader of them, on a bayish horse—the sun and the moon never shone upon his like—eyes he had were more shining than our eyes, and as to comeliness, there was no more to be found. The champions of Greece, and to put all of them together, would not equal the flower of one drop of his strong blood.

Coppinger: I'm thinking it is little satisfaction we will get questioning him, and his thoughts going as they do upon every queer track. Old he is, and it is all in his brain the things he does be talking of.

Malachi: You have me tormented with your catechism, and you brought away my little bit of a board. Let you go ask Peggy Mahon, that knows all he went through better again than myself.

Coppinger: Peggy Mahon to know him it is likely he was born in this district. She maybe got knowledge he would be some great man, picking it out of the stars.

Mrs. Coppinger: No, but go, Peter Mannion and ask a loan of the Register that has all the names of the parish set down for maybe four score years or a hundred years back.

Mannion: I won't be long getting it, supposing the clerk to be at hand. It isn't easy find him within. The dates not to be away and astray, it would be very handy to get some information from penmanship, besides dragging it as if from the depths and the bottom of a bog. (*Goes.*)

Malachi: You would stand to look at him in a fair I say. Fair hair on him the colour of amber. Twelve handsome riders and he before them all——

The Image

Costello: Sure we have the likeness of him here that was made to represent him the way he was thought to be, or that other great men of his sort would be in the habit of appearing. (*Holds up picture.*)

Malachi: (*Coming up eagerly close to picture, staring and falling back.*) The devil's welcome to you! Is it you is calling yourself Hugh O'Lorrha? My bitter curse upon you, how well you stole his name! (*He backs away from it.*)

Costello: If you had intellect to understand things of the sort you would not be running it down. It is away in Dublin that was made, and *they* should know.

Malachi: I'll shave you without soap or razor! It's a skelp of a stone I would be well pleased to be giving you, and you laying claim to his name! That God may perish you! Is it for the like of you the sea was filled with wonders and with signs?

Coppinger: Indeed it is not much the way it is put down on paper, but cutting will be a great addition to it, the time it will be shaped in stone.

Malachi: A man that had seven colours in his eyes! That was for beauty and for strength beyond a hundred! His name in lines of golden letters written on his own blue sword! A man could whip the world and that broke every gap!—

Sure you have no action in you, no action at all, without liveliness, without a nod. The devil himself wouldn't take you or the like of you!

Costello: Well now, Malachi, haven't you the terrible scissors of a tongue! He is well-looking enough if it wasn't he has some sort of a comical dress.

Malachi: (*Threatening picture, but held back by Mrs. Coppinger.*) Be off out of that you unnatural creature, or it is I will twist your mouth round to your poll! I'll blacken the teeth of you and whiten the eyes of you! It is your brain I will be putting out through the windows of your head! If I had but a rod in my hand it's soon I would make you limber! It is powder I will make of your bones and will turn them to fine ashes! It is myself is well able to tear you to flitters and to part your limbs asunder! Be going now before I'll break you in thirty halves. (*Tries to rush at it, but stumbles over box.*) To be putting such an appearance and such an insult on my darling man! The devil skelp the whole of ye! My bitter curse upon the spot ye had planned out for to be putting up a thing the very spit of yourselves, and ugly out of measure! (*Kicks over box.*)

Hosty (*picking up board, which has been hidden under it.*) That is a bit of the Kerry men's green bordered boat, that was lost as was right, and they robbing our mackerel.

Mrs. Coppinger: I said that I heard the name of Hugh O'Lorrha in some place. It is what they were telling me, that was the name on the boat.

Malachi: (Snatching it.) Oh, my board, my little bit of a board! How well it failed them to hide from me what the waves of the sea could not keep from me!

Costello: No wonder you to be comforting yourself, Malachi, the way you won't be fearing at any time your brave hero to be but a deceit and a mockery. Sure he must be some big man his name to be printed on a board.

Malachi: A deceit is it? I to think that, why would I be wearing his livery? It is what I am thinking, Darby Costello, you are a very liary man. (*He puts board under his shirt.*) Oh, my heart-secret, wait till I'll hide you from them all, and they not able to understand a thing they are not fit to understand! There's a bad class of people in this place, are not worthy to see so much as your name! I don't want to be annoyed with them any more than I am. I'll keep my knowledge to myself, between myself and the bare stones. I'll go back to the beasts and the birds that pay respect to him!

Hosty: Do so, and it might chance you to see him again, and the full moon working in your head.

Malachi: (*Turning back for a moment as he goes.*) So I will see him again! I'm well able to track him through fire and fair water. And I'll know him when I will see him, and that is what you or the like of you will not do. And another thing. I tell you I'd sooner he not to be in it, than he to be in it, and to be what you are making him out to be! (*Goes.*)

(*Band heard in the distance.*)

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) Here now, I chanced the clerk leaving the door. Here is the Register so far as it goes back, and that is but after the year of the Famine. To go astray the old ones did or some ignorant person that made an end of them. You will find the name you are looking for in this——

Hosty: You will, the same time you will find a hundred goats without damage or roguery.

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it that the clerk said there was in it the name of Hugh O'Lorrha?

Mannion: He did, and he said besides that——

Hosty: A name to be down in the register, it did not get there by itself. I was getting to be in dread he might be some sort of a Jack o' Lanthorn.

Coppinger: What way could he be that, and the country entirely calling their leagues and their hurling clubs by his name? It is not to a

Jack o' Lanthorn I myself would be working out a statue of stone.

Mannion: If you will but listen till I'll tell you what the clerk was saying——

Hosty: Let you sound out now, Darby Costello, whatever may be written in the book.

Costello: (*Giving it to Mrs. Coppinger.*) No, but Mrs. Coppinger. It would take *her* to do that; she that can read out the paper the same as if God put it in her mind.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Sitting down and opening first page.*) Michael—Michael Morrissey—that's not it—where now was he born?—Bally-rabbitt—he should be father so to the Morrissey is herding for Cunningham.

Hosty: Don't be going through the races and generations now, or you never will make out the name.

Mrs. Coppinger: Thomas Fahy, and after that Joseph Fahy and Peter Fahy——well, they got enough of space in the book, that whole tribe of the Fahys. It is a book for themselves they have a right to be paying for, and not to be taking space that is for the whole of the parish.

Hosty: Go on now, ma'am, go on.

Mrs. Coppinger: Would you believe now here is more of the Fahys. Congregated on the page they are, the same as a flock of stairs.

Hosty: (*Seizing book and turning over pages to the end.*) Make now a second reading—it's best begin at the finish till you'll get shut of them. There's a good deal of the Fahys wore away since that time.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's hard to please you, Brian Hosty, and you so hasty as you are. Here now is the last name in the book if that will satisfy you. What is it? H, Hugh — What will you say now hearing, it is no less than Hugh O'Lorrha?

Costello: The man we are looking for.

Coppinger: (*Looking over Mrs. Coppinger's shoulder.*) So it is too. Sound out the year now, Mary, and the day, the way I will space them in my mind.

Mrs. Coppinger: May the tenth in this year—the day ere yesterday——no but yesterday——

Hosty: It is the year you are reading wrong. What way would a man be getting a monument, and he to be baptized within the last past two days.

Mrs. Coppinger: Reckon it for yourself so, if ever you learned figures on a slate.

Hosty: (*Taking book.*) The year our own year—sure enough, unless there did clouds rise up in my head.

The Image

Mannion: It is what the clerk was saying, and you to give me leave to be telling it, there is a man of the Fahys——

Mrs. Coppinger: Have done with your Fahys! Is it that you are saying Hugh O'Lorrha's name was ever Englished into Fahy?

Mannion: A man of the Fahys that is living anear the forge gave his young son, that was baptized yesterday, the name of Hugh O'Lorrha, where he was hearing it belled out through the whole of the district.

Mrs. Coppinger: I'm no way obliged to you, Peter Mannion, for keeping that close the way you did, and all the trouble I am after going to in the search. And what call had he to go tracking after names outside of his own generations and his tribe?

Mannion: It is what the clerk was saying, a young weak little family he has, ten of them there are in it; and he has the names were in his family, or on the best of the Saints, mostly used previously.

Hosty: And as to the real Hugh O'Lorrha, we are as wise as we were at the first.

Coppinger: What are books and what are Registers put beside any person's mind? Come out here now, Peggy Mahon, and tell us what you can tell us, and what we are craving to know.

Hosty: You will get nothing at all out of that one, unless it might be cracked talk and foolishness.

(Peggy comes out and they all crowd around her. She has a cat in her arms, and sits down on the seat outside her door.)

Mrs. Coppinger: Tell us out now, Peggy, all you can tell, about one Hugh O'Lorrha.

Peggy: I am not in humour for talking and for foolishness. The cat that has my tea destroyed, that's all the newses I have. To put his paw in it he did, that I should throw it out of the door. There is no person would drink water or any mortal thing and a cat after touching it, for cats is queer, cats are the queerest things on the face of the globe.

Coppinger: Come on now, Peggy, till I'll question you.

Peggy: The day I wouldn't get my drop of tea I could keep nothing at all in my mind. What call had he to go meddle with it? There is something is not right in cats.

Hosty: Where's the use of questioning her? Giddy she is with age, and it's impossible to keep a head on her.

Mrs. Coppinger: Wait a second and I'll have her coaxed, bringing her out a cup of tea. *(Goes into house.)*

Coppinger: Tell us now, the same as you told Malachi Naughton, all that happened to Hugh O'Lorrha, and that gave him so great a name.

Peggy: Hugh O'Lorrha—Hugh O'Lorrha that was all the name ever he had, and it will be his name ever and always. I heard that since I was remembering, since I had sense or head.

Coppinger: I suppose now it could hardly be yourself, ma'am, befriended him, and he coming into the world?

Peggy: Wasn't that a rogue of a cat now, to go dip his paw down into my tea?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Coming out with cup of tea.*) Here now, Peggy Mahon, drink a sup of this and it will give you nice courage for a while.

Peggy: (*Turning her shoulder to her.*) What call had you to go saying my own man would not recognise me and I dead? And all the world knows that Him that ordered lights for the day and for the night time, has given out orders for all He will send for, to come before Him in their bloom.

Coppinger: (*Taking cup and offering it to her.*) That is so surely. At thirty years of age and in their bloom. (*Peggy drinks tea.*)

Costello: She won't refuse after that to tell her story, and she knowing it to tell, about Hugh O'Lorrha.

Peggy: I know it, and it's myself does know it. I have a grand little story about him.

Coppinger: Out with it so, ma'am.

Peggy: There was a widow-woman one time, and she is not in it now, and what signifies if she ever was in it at all——

Mrs. Coppinger: That has the sound nearly of the beginning of some ancient vanity.

Coppinger: Have patience now, it is coming.

Peggy: She had but one son only, and the name was on him was Hugh Beg O'Lorrha.

Costello: My dearest life! I was thinking the same thing before. Sure that is a folk-tale my grandfather used to be telling in the years gone by.

Mrs. Coppinger: Can you tell us now at what time did he live?

Peggy: How would I know? I suppose at the time of the giants. He came in one day to his mother. "Go boil a hen for me and bake a cake for me," says he, "till I'll travel as far as the Court and ask the King's daughter."

Costello: I know it through and through. It is nothing at all but a story-teller's yarn.

The Image

Coppinger: Is that truth you are saying?

Costello: To the best of my belief I am speaking the truth. I can tell it through to the binding. To take the life he did of the Naked Hangman, that was hid in the egg of a duck.

Mrs. Coppinger: Why didn't you tell us before now, Darby Costello, that you knew Hugh O'Lorrha to be but a deception and an empty tale.

Costello: I was someway shy and fearful to be going against the whole of ye. And sure when we had to believe it, we must believe it.

Hosty: And is it only in the poets' stories he is, and nothing but a name upon the wind? What way did it fail you to know that, Thomas Coppinger, and that Malachi had put his own skin upon the story.

Coppinger: I don't know from Adam's race, unless it was witchcraft and spells and oracles. How well it failed you to find it out yourself.

Mrs. Coppinger: Sure he must have lived in some place, or why would we be putting up a monument to him?

(Band and cars heard nearer.)

Hosty: He lived in no other place but in the Munster poets' lies. It is great ridicule will be put on us now by all that are coming the road.

To jibe at us they will, we to be spending our means upon a man that never was in it at all.

Coppinger: The thing that was to give me my chance to have brought me ruination in the end! Since the Gael was sold at Aughrim there never was such a defeat!

Costello: I'm in dread it's to do violence to us they might. There will always be contrary people in a crowd. It is up to my neck in the tide I would wish to go, the way no person could come near me, or be making attacks on me. (*All sit down disconsolately.*)

Peggy: (*Standing up and giving a delighted laugh.*) Ha, Ha! Ye are defeated, and ye earned defeat! Sure ye know nothing at all. This one running down the fool's man, saying he was made but out of thoughts and of fancies; and this one (*Pointing to Mrs. Coppinger*) running down my own man, saying he was of no use and of no account, and that he was not better, but worse, than any other one.

Mrs. Coppinger: It was you told that to her, Darby Costello, for to make mischief between neighbours were at one.

Costello: If I did it was to raise her heart and to pacify her, where she was fretting with the thought she would not come to him and she dead. But the time I'll go doing comfortable things

again, it's within in my own mind I'll go do them, the way I won't suffer in my skin. Such abuse to be getting! I might as well be a renegade.

Coppinger: Give no heed to them, Peggy, and I myself will carve a slab will do credit to your man, and will keep his name above ground for ever.

Peggy: I will give you no leave to do that! I'll ask no headstone and his name upon it, and strangers maybe to be sounding it out with the queer crabbed talk they have, and the gibberish, and ridiculing it, and maybe making out my clean comrade, my comely Patrick, to be but a blemished little manneen, having a stuttering tongue. (*She goes into cabin and turns at door.*) A queer race ye are, a queer race. It is right Malachi was quitting you, and it was wise. Any person to own a heart secret, it is best for him hide it in the heart. Let the whole world draw near to question me, but I'll be wise this time. I'll say no word of Patrick Mahon, and no word of Hugh Beg O'Lorrha, that is maybe nearer to him than some that are walking this street. Oh yes, oh yes, I'll be wary this time and I'll be wise, very wise. I'll be as wise as the man that didn't tell his dream! (*She goes into her house and shuts door.*)

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) Is it long now since any of ye went to the place the whales landed upon the strand?

Hosty: It would be seventeen times better for themselves and ourselves, those beasts to have stopped browsing where they were, in their pen that is beneath the green ocean.

Coppinger: Hadn't I enough to do planning out the figure and the foundation and the stone? I'd have the day lost visiting them. Monday morning with the help of God, I'll go take a view of them.

Mannion: All the view you are apt to get, is of the seals spits lying on the strand, and of the waves and the wrackage of the sea.

Coppinger: What are you raving about?

Mannion: In the argument the whales went out from ye.

Coppinger: They couldn't stir unknownst to us. What way could they walk, having no legs?

Mannion: The Connemara lads have the oil drawn from the one of them, and the other one was swept away with the spring tide.

Costello: For pity's sake! That cannot be true!

Mannion: It is true, too true to be put in the ballads.

Hosty: It is no mean blow to the place losing them; and to yourself, Thomas Coppinger, and your grand statue swept away along with them.

The Image

Costello: Let you not fret, Thomas. There did no badness of misfortune ever come upon Ireland but someone was the better of it. You not to go shape the image, there is no person can say, it is to mis-shape it you did. Let you comfort yourself this time, for it is likely you would have failed doing the job.

Coppinger: I was thinking that myself, Darby. I to begin I'd have to follow it up, and the deer knows where might it leave me.

Mrs. Coppinger: We'll not be scarce of talk for the rest of our years anyway. For some do be telling the story was always in it, but we will be telling the story never was in it before and never will be in it at all!

(The band is heard quite close playing "O'Donell Abu!" Mrs. Coppinger rushes in at door, looks out. Coppinger hides behind headstone. Hosty leaps the wall into Connacht. Costello hides at side of Peggy's house. Only Peter Mannion left in centre. Band quite close and shouts of Hi! for Hugh O'Lorrha!)

CURTAIN

NOTES WRITTEN FOR FIRST EDITION, 1910

TO A CERTAIN EDITOR—"When the 'Image' was produced at the Abbey, I put on the programme a quotation, 'Secretum meum Mihi,' 'My Secret to Myself,' which I had for a while thought of taking as its name. I think from a note in your paper you and some others believed that the secret I wanted to keep was my own, whereas I had but given a 'heart-secret' into the keeping of each of the persons of the play.

"One of the old stories known in the cottages is of a beautiful lady loved by a king's son, who follows her to a garden where they loved and are happy. She has laid on him one condition only: 'You must never wonder at me, or say anything about me at all.' But one day she passed by him in the garden, and when he saw her so beautiful, he turned and said to the gardener: 'There was never a lady so beautiful as mine in the whole world.' 'There never was,' said the gardener, 'and you will be without her now,' he said. And so it happened, and he lost her from that day because he had put his thought about her into common words.

"So it fell out with my old people. Brian Hosty's 'Image' was his native, passionately loved province

of Connacht; but he boasted of it to some who could see its thorns and thistles with passionless eyes, looking over the mering wall. Mrs. Coppinger had her mind set upon America as a place where the joy of life would reach its summit, but that hope is clouded by the derision of one who has been there, and seen but the ugliness about him. Costello thought of an earth all peace, but when he spoke of peace 'they made themselves ready to war.' Thomas Coppinger dreamed of the great monument he would make to some great man, and old Peggy of one made beautiful through long memory and death; and Malachi of one who was beyond and above earthly life. And each of these images crumbled at the touch of reality, like a wick that has escaped the flame, and is touched by common air. And the more ecstatic the vision the more impossible its realisation until that time when, after the shadows of earth, the seer shall 'awake and be satisfied.'

"You are certainly proud of what your paper has done to bring back respect for the work of Irish hands. But I wonder if it is all you intended it to be when you wrote in a little book I edited ten years ago of a 'new Ireland rising up out of the foundations of the old, with love and not hate as its inspiration?' For you also have been an Image-maker. The Directors of our Theatre are beginning to get some applause, even in Dublin, for its success, but only they know how far it still is from the idea with which they set out. And so with my sisters' sons, to whom I have dedicated this play. One brought together the Conference that did so much towards the peaceable and friendly

changing of land ownership. The other has made Dublin the Orient of all—artists or learners or critics, who value the great modern school of French painting. Yet I fancy it was a dream beyond possible realisation that gave each of them the hard patience needed by those who build, and the courage needed by the ‘Disturber’ who does not often escape some knocks and buffetings. But if the dreamer had never tried to tell the dream that had come across him, even though to ‘betray his secret to the multitude’ must shatter his own perfect vision, the world would grow clogged and dull with the weight of flesh and of clay. And so we must say ‘God love you’ to the Image-makers, for do we not live by the shining of those scattered fragments of their dream?

“I do not know if I should have written this ‘apology’ at the first playing of ‘the Image,’ or if I ought to leave it unwritten now. For after all, those enjoy it most who say in what I think is your own formula—‘this is what Lady Gregory calls a comedy, but everybody else calls a farce.’”

* * * *

I owe an acknowledgment as well as many thanks to A. E., who gave me the use of an idea that had come to him for a play, which he had no thought of carrying out. It was about a man who collected money in a country town for a monument to one Michael M’Carthy Ward, I forget on what grounds. The money is collected, the collector disappears, and then only it is found that Michael M’Carthy Ward had never existed at all. I meant to carry this out

The Image

in the manner of "Spreading the News" or "The Jackdaw," but the "Image" took the matter into its own hands, and whether for good or ill-luck, the three-act play has grown. I think I have not quite failed, yet it also is not what I set out to do.

* * * *

It was after the play had been written that an old man strolling out from Gort one Sunday talked of O'Connell. "There is a nice monument put up to him in Ennis," he said. "In a corner it is of the middle of the street, and himself high up on it, holding a book. It was a poor shoemaker set that going. I saw him in Gort one time; a coat of O'Connell's he had that he chanced in some place. Only for him there would be no monument; it was he gathered money for it, and there was none would refuse him." And still later, this spring, I went to see the Hill of Tara, and I was told that the statue of Saint Patrick on it "was made by a mason—a common mason. If it wasn't that he had made it, and had it ready, and was a poor man, it would not have been put up." So the ambitions of Malachi Naughton and Thomas Coppinger have not been without ancestry.

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HANRAHAN'S OATH

MARY GILLIS	.	.	<i>A Lodging-house Keeper.</i>
MARGARET ROONEY	.		<i>Her Friend.</i>
OWEN HANRAHAN	.		<i>A Wandering Poet.</i>
COEY	.	.	<i>A Ragged Man.</i>
MRS. COEY	.	.	<i>His Wife.</i>
MICHAEL FEENEY	.		<i>A Poteen-maker.</i>

HANRAHAN'S OATH

Time: Before the Famine.

Scene: A wild and rocky place. Door to left of a stone cabin that was once the bed of a Saint.

Mary Gillis: (Coming from right.) Did you get any tidings of him, Margy?

Margaret Rooney: All I heard was he was seen going over the scalp of the hill at daybreak.

Mary Gillis: Bad cess to him! Why wouldn't he stop in the house last night beyond any other night?

Margaret Rooney: You know well it was going to the preaching of that strange friar put disturbance in his mind.

Mary Gillis: Take care is he listening to him yet.

Margaret Rooney: He is not. I went in the archway of the chapel and took a view. The missionary is in it yet, giving out masses and benedictions and rosaries and every whole thing. But

as to Owen Hanrahan, there was no sign of him in it at all.

Mary Gillis: It is to the drink houses I went searching for him.

Margaret Rooney: He was never greatly given to drink.

Mary Gillis: If he isn't, he is given to company and he'd talk down all Ireland.

Margaret Rooney: So he is a terror for telling stories, and it is yourself made your own profit by it. It is his gift of talk brought the harvesters that would live and die with him, to your house this five weeks past.

Mary Gillis: Yourself that is begrudging me that, where you want to keep him to yourself.

Margaret Rooney: So I would keep him, I to find him. I wouldn't wish him to go travelling. He had his enough of hardship. There is no great stay in him.

Mary Gillis: There are but the two roads for him to travel from the scalp, over and hither. He to come this way, believe me I'll bring him back to the town.

Margaret Rooney: He wouldn't go with you.

Mary Gillis: I have a word will bring him, never fear.

Margaret Rooney: What word is that?

Mary Gillis: What was it he was giving out to the two of us ere yesterday, the time he came back after having drink taken at the sailor's wake?

Margaret Rooney: I don't keep in mind what he said.

Mary Gillis: You maybe remember the story he gave us of one Feeney that he was with at a mountain still, and that made an assault on a gauger.

Margaret Rooney: Feeney was the name, sure enough—, but what signifies that?

Mary Gillis: I'll make a spancel from that story will bring him into hiding in the Borough.

Margaret Rooney: You might not. It's little you know the twists of a poet's mind. He to have the fit of wandering, it is round the wide world he might go.

Mary Gillis: Hurry on now, let you go the lower road and see will you bring him any better than myself. (*Pushes her.*)—Go on now, he might pass and go on unknownst to you!

Margaret Rooney: I'll not be three minutes going down the hill. (*Goes.*)

Mary Gillis: (*Sitting down.*) That you may! It's the hither road he is coming.

Hanrahan: (*Coming in, his head bent down.*) Isn't it a terrible place we are living in and terrible the wickedness of the whole world!

Mary Gillis: What is it ails you, Owen Hanrahan?

Hanrahan: People to be breaking all the laws of God and giving no heed to the beyond!

Mary Gillis: It is likely the preaching of the friar put those thoughts athrough your head.

Hanrahan: Murders and robberies and lust and neglecting the mass!

Mary Gillis: Ah, come along home with me to the dinner. You are fasting this good while back.

Hanrahan: What way can people be thinking of gluttony, and the terrors of the grave before them.

Mary Gillis: Come on now to the little house, and the drop of drink will put such thoughts from your mind.

Hanrahan: Drink! That was another of them! Seven deadly sins in all!

Mary Gillis: What call has a poet the like of you to go listening to a missioner stringing talk? You, that is so handy at it yourself.

Hanrahan: A lovely saint he was! He came from foreign. To let fall a drop of scalding water on your foot would be bad, he said, or to lay your hand on a hot coal on the floor; but to die with any big sin on your soul; it will be burning for ever and ever, and that burning will be worse than any

burning upon earth. To say that he did, rising up his hand. The great fear he put on me was of eternity. Oh, he was a darling man!

Mary Gillis: Ah, that is the way that class to be beckoning flames at the people, or what way would they get their living? Come along now where you will have company and funning.

Hanrahan: Leave touching me! I have no mind to be put away from my holy thoughts. Three big mastiffs, their red gullets open and burning the same as three wax candles!

Mary Gillis: Come along, I tell you, to the comforts of the town.

Hanrahan: Get away, you hag, before I'll lay a hand on you!

Mary Gillis: After the good treatment I gave you this five weeks past, beyond any lodger was in the house!

Hanrahan: Be off, or I'll do you some injury!

Mary Gillis: It's kind for you do an injury on me, the same as you did on the man that was sent before the judge!

Hanrahan: Who was that?

Mary Gillis: Feeney that stuck down the gauger.

Hanrahan: Anyone didn't see who did it—He was brought before no judge!

Mary Gillis: You didn't know he was taken and charged and brought to the Tuam Assizes?

Hanrahan: They could have no proof against him. It was a dark cloudy night.

Mary Gillis: That is what they are saying. It was in no fair way it was made known who did it.

Hanrahan: Ah what did he do but put up his fist this way . . . and the gauger was standing where you are supposing . . . and there was a naggin in poor Feeney's hand (*Stoops for a stone*)—and there lit a stroke on him (*Strikes as if at her*)—It's hard say was it that knocked him or was it the Almighty God.

Mary Gillis: There is another thing the people are saying.

Hanrahan: What is that?

Mary Gillis: They are saying there was another man along with Feeney at the bog-still.

Hanrahan: What harm if they are saying that?

Mary Gillis: It will be well for that man not to be rambling the countryside, but to stop here in the shelter of the town where it is not known. It is likely his name is given out through the baronies of Galway and to the merings of County Mayo.

Hanrahan: Little I care they to know I was in it. What could they lay to my charge?

Mary Gillis: You had drink taken. You have no recollection what you said in the spree-house in Monivea. It is the name of an informer you have gained in those districts, where you gave out the account of Feeney's deed, in the hearing of spies and of Government men.

Hanrahan: That cannot be so! An informer! That would be a terrible story!

Mary Gillis: A poor case they are saying, you to be roaming the country free, and Feeney under chains through your fault.

Hanrahan: An informer! I'll go give myself up in his place! I'll swear it was I did it! Maybe I did too. I am certain I hit him a kick that loosed the patch on my shoe. (*Holds foot up*). I'll go set Feeney free.

Mary Gillis: You cannot do that. He is gone to his punishment, where he was convicted of assault and attempt to kill.

Hanrahan: In earnest?

Mary Gillis: It is much he escaped the death of the rope. It is to send him to transportation they did.

Hanrahan: The Lord save us!

Mary Gillis: Sent out in the ship with thieves and vagabonds to Australia or Van Dieman's

Hanrahan's Oath

Land, to be yoked in traces along with blacks driving a plough for the over-Government.

Hanrahan: Transported and judged! It is a bad story for me that judgment is! And it to be brought about through me giving out too much talk!

Mary Gillis: Ah come along and get a needleful of porter and we'll have a good evening in the town.

Hanrahan: There will be no good evening or good morrow come to me for ever! Let me run to take his place in the ship and in the chains.

Mary Gillis: Sure it sailed away yesterday. It is ploughing his way across the green ocean Michael Feeney should be at this hour.

Hanrahan: I'll go to judgment all the same! They'll send me out after him and set him free!

Mary Gillis: Not a fear of them, and they having him in their hand. And it's likely anyway the ship might go down in some storm.

Hanrahan: To have sent a man to his chastisement through chattering! That is not of the nature of friendship. That is surely one of the seven deadly sins!

Mary Gillis: Sure there is nothing standing to you only your share of talk.

Hanrahan: It is that was my ruin! It would

be better for me be born without it, the same as a blessed sheep! It is the sin of the tongue is surely the blackest of all! A man that died with drink in him, the missionary was saying, the soul would sooner stop in torment a thousand years than come back to the body that made it so unclean. And surely my soul would think it worse again to be coming under the sway of a tongue that had it steered to the mouth of the burning mountain, that is said to be the door of hell!

Mary Gillis: Ah, it is your own talk had always pleasantness in it—come on now—the people love to see you travelling through the town.

Hanrahan: It is the tongue that does be giving out lies and spreading false reports and putting reproach upon a neighbour, till a character that was as white as lime will turn to be black as coal!

Mary Gillis: No, but good words yourself does be putting out. Whoever you praised was well praised.

Hanrahan: A cross word in this house, and a quarrel out of it in the next house, and fighting in the streets from that again, till the whole world wide is at war. The man that would make a gad for the tongue would be put far beyond Alexander that laid one around all the kingdoms of the world!

Mary Gillis: It is the roads would be lonesome without the sound of your own songs.

Hanrahan: To make silence in the roads for ever would be a better task than was ever done by Orpheus, and he playing harpstrings to the flocks!

Mary Gillis: It is not yourself could keep silence in the world, without you would be a ghost.

Hanrahan: My poor Feeney! He that wore out the night making still-whiskey would put courage into armies of men, and the hares of the mountain gathered around him looking on. I could cry down my eyes, he to be at this time in the black hole of a vessel you couldn't hardly go into head and heels, among rats and every class of ravenous thing! Have you ere a knife about you or a sword or a dagger, that you'll give it to me to do my penance, till I'll cut the tongue out from my head and bury it under the hill?

Mary Gillis: Ah, come along and do your penance the same as any other one, saying a rosary alongside your bed.

Hanrahan: I'll go no more into the room with lodgers and strangers and dancers and youngsters enjoying music. I will wear out my time in this cabin of a saint, shedding tears unknownst to the world, hearing no word and speaking no word will be putting my repentance astray. There is

great safety in silence! It will cut off the world and all of sins at the one stroke.

Mary Gillis: It is not yourself could keep from the talk without you would be dumb.

Hanrahan: So I will be dumb and live in dumbness, if I have my mind laid to it! I will make an oath with myself. (*Puts up hands.*) By the red heat of anger and by the hard strength of the wind I will speak no word to any living person through the length of a year and a day! I will earn Feeney's pardon doing that! I'll be praying for him on all my beads!

Mary Gillis: Ah, before the year is out he will have his escape made, or maybe have done some crime will earn him punishment, whether or no, without any blame upon yourself. It will fail you to stop in this wilderness. You were always fond of life.

Hanrahan: (*Sitting down and taking off boots.*) Bring away my shoes to some safe place to the end of my penance, that I will not be tempted to break away! Mind them well till the time I will be wanting them again.

Mary Gillis: It is a big fool you are and a cracked thief and a blockhead and a headstrong ignorant man!

Hanrahan's Oath

Hanrahan: I am not in this place for wrastling! It is good back-answers I could give you, if it wasn't that I am dumb!

Mary Gillis: I'm in no dread of your answers! I'd put curses out of my own mouth as quick as another the time I would be vexed!

Hanrahan: Get out now of this! The devil himself couldn't do his repentance with the noise and the chat of you! (*Threatens her.*)

Mary Gillis: Whisper now, one thing only and I'll go.

Hanrahan: Hurry on so, and say what is it.

Mary Gillis: What place did you put the keg of still-whiskey you were saying you brought away at the time Feeney ran, the gauger being stretched on the bog?

Hanrahan: What way can I whisper it, and I under an oath to be dumb!

Mary Gillis: Is it in the bog you hid it? Or within a ditch or a drain. Let you beckon your hand at me, the time I'll give out the right place, and you'll not break your promise and your oath. Under a dung-heap maybe . . . Let you make now some sign . . .

Hanrahan: (*Seizing stick and rushing at her.*) Sign is it? Here's signs for you! My grief that I cannot break my oath!

Mary Gillis: (Who has rushed off looking back.)
Your oath is it? You may believe me telling you,
it will fail you for one day only to keep a gad upon
your tongue! *(Goes.)*

(Hanrahan shakes fist at her and sits down.

Rocks himself and moans.

*A ragged man with a sack of seaweed comes
in and looks at him timidly.)*

Coey: Fine day! (Hanrahan takes no notice.)
Fine day! *(Louder.)* Fine day, the Lord be
praised! . . . *(Hanrahan scowls.)* What is on
you? FINE DAY! Is it deaf you are . . . Is
it maybe after taking drink you are? To put your
head down in the spring well below would maybe
serve you. *(Hanrahan shakes head indignantly.)*
Is it that you are after being bet? A puck on the
poll is apt to put confusion in the mind. *(Another
indignant shake.)* Tell me out now, what is on you
or what happened you at all?

*(Hanrahan gets up. Makes same dumb show
as he did to Mary Gillis, stoops, picks up
stone, rushes as if to threaten Coey.)*

*Coey: The Lord be between us and harm! It
is surely a wild man is in it! (He throws down
basket and rushes off right.)*

*Hanrahan: Ah, what is it ails you? That you
may never be better this side of Christmas . . .
What am I doing? Is it speaking in spite of myself*

I am? What at all can I do! I to speak, I am breaking my oath; and I not to speak, I have the world terrified. (*Sits down dejectedly, then starts.*) What is that? A thorn that ran into me . . . a whitethorn bush. . . . It is Heaven put it in my way. There is no sin or no harm to be talking with a bush, that is a fashion among poets. Oh, my little bush, it is a saint I am out and out! It is a man without blame I will be from this time! To go through the whole gamut of the heat and of the frost with no person to be annoying me till I get a fit of talk and be letting out wicked words, that is surely the road will reach to Paradise. It is a right plan I made and a right penance I put on myself. As I conversè now with yourself, the same as with a living person, so every living person I may hold talk with, and my penance ended, I will think them to be as harmless as a little whitethorn bush. It is a holy life I will follow, and not to be annoyed with the humans of the world that do be prattling and prating, carrying mischief here and there, lavish in tale-bearing and talk! It is a great sin from God Almighty to be bally-ragging and drawing scandal on one another, rising quarrels and rows! I declare to honest goodness the coneys and the hares are ahead of most Christians on the road to heaven, where they have not the power to curse and damn, or to do mischief through flatteries and chatterings and

coaxings and jestings and jokings and riddles and fables and fancies and vanities, and backbitings and mockeries and mumblings and grumblings and treacheries and false reports! It is free I am now from the screechings and vain jabberings of the world, in this holy quiet place that is all one nearly with the blessed silence of heaven! (*He takes up his beads.*)

(*Coey and Mrs. Coey come on and look at him from behind.*)

Coey: A wild man I tell you he is, wild and shy.

Mrs. Coey: Wording a prayer he would seem to be, letting deep sighs out of himself. A wild man would be apt to be a pagan or an unbeliever.

Coey: I tell you he rose up and made a plunge at me and rose a stone over my poll. If it wasn't for getting the bag I left after me, I wouldn't go anear him. It's a good thought I had taking out of it the two shillings I got for the winkles I sold from the strand, and giving them into your own charge. . . . Take care would he turn and make a run at me!

Mrs. Coey: He is no wild man, but a spoiled priest or a crazed saint or some thing of the sort.

Coey: Striving to put curses on me he was, but it failed him to bring them out. It might be that

he was born a dummy into the world, and driveling from his birth out.

(Hanrahan listens.)

Mrs. Coey: Would you say now would he be Cassidy Baun, the troubled Friar, that the love of a woman put astray in his wits?

Coey: A half-fool I would say him to be. But it might be that he has a pain in the jaw or a tooth that would want to be drawn. Or is it that the tongue was cut from him by some person had a cause against him.

(Hanrahan turns indignantly and puts tongue out.)

Mrs. Coey: He is not maimed or ailing. It is long I was coveting to see such a one that would have power to show miracles and wonders, or to do cures with a gospel, or put away the wildfire with herbs.

Coey: Let him show a miracle or do something out of the way, and I'll believe it.

Mrs. Coey: If he does, it is to myself he will show it. I am the most one is worthy.

Coey: Have a care. He is about to turn around.

Mrs. Coey: (Sitting down.) Let me put a decent appearance on myself before he will take notice of me. *(Begins putting on the pair of boots Hanra-*

han had given to Mary Gillis' charge, and which she takes from under her shawl.)

Coey: A pair of shoes! What way did they come into your hand?

Mrs. Coey: It is that I found them on the road. . . .

Coey: They are belonging so to some person will come looking for them.

Mrs. Coey: They are not but to myself they belong . . . it is that they were sent to me by messenger.

Coey: And who would bestow you shoes, you that never put a shoe or a boot on you and the snow three feet on the ground, and you after going barefoot through the frost of two score of years!

Mrs. Coey: There's plenty to bestow them to me. Haven't I a first cousin went harvesting out in England where there is maybe shovels full of gold.

(Hanrahan comes across quickly, seizes boots angrily and takes them away, shaking his fists at her.)

Coey: (Retreating.) There is coming on him a fit of frenzy! Run now, Let you run!

(Hanrahan seizes and shakes her.)

Mrs. Coey: (On her knees.) Oh leave your hand off of me, blessed father! I'll confess all! Oh it is a miracle is after being worked on me!

Hanrahan's Oath

(*Another shake.*) A miracle to put shame on me where I told a lie, may God forgive me! on the head of the boots!

Coey: I was thinking it was lying you were.

Mrs. Coey: How well he knew it, the dear and the holy man! He that can read the hidden thoughts of my heart the same as if written on my brow!

Coey: Is it to steal them you did?

Mrs. Coey: (*To Hanrahan.*) Do not look at me so terrible wicked, and I'll make my confession the same as if it was the Bishop was in it!

Coey: Is it that I am wedded with a thief and a robber!

Mrs. Coey: I am not a thief, but to tell a lie I did, laying down that I got them from my first cousin, where I bought them from a woman going the road.

Coey: That's another lie, where would you get the money?

Mrs. Coey: Your own two shillings I gave for them that you put in my care a while ago. Take the shoes, holy saint, for I'll lay no hand on them any more. There never was the like of it of a start ever taken out of me.

Coey: You asked a miracle and you got a miracle you'll not forget from this day. (*Takes off*

hat.) I'll never go against such things from this out. A good saint he is, by hell!

(Margaret Rooney comes on, Hanrahan catching sight of her flings down boots and crouches behind bush.)

Margaret Rooney: Did you see anyone passing this side?

Coey: Not a one.

Margaret Rooney: I am in search of a friend I have, that is gone travelling the road.

Mrs. Coey: There is not a one in this place but the blessed saint is saying out prayers abroad under the bush.

Margaret Rooney: I knew no saint in this place. What sort is he?

Coey: You would say him to be a man that has not a great deal of talk.

Mrs. Coey: He is a great saint; he is so saintly as that there couldn't be saintlier than what he is. He is living in the wilderness on nuts and the berries of the bush, and his two jaws being bloomy all the time.

Coey: He to be known, the people will come drawing from this to Dublin till he will have them around him in throngs.

Margaret Rooney: *(Seizing boots.)* What way did you get those shoes?

Hanrahan's Oath

Coey: It was the saint threw them there in that place.

Margaret Rooney: What happened the man that owned them?

Mrs. Coey: (*Pointing to bush.*) Sòrra one of me knows. Go crave to the saint under the bush to give out knowledge of that. It's himself should be well able to do it. He beckoned the hand at me a while ago and told me all that ever I did.

Margaret Rooney: (*Goes to back of bush but Hanrahan moves round from her.*) I ask your pardon father, but will you tell me what happened the man I am in search of and what way did his shoes come to this place? I am certain he would not part them unless he would be plundered and robbed. Tell me where can I find him.

Mrs. Coey: Do not be annoying him now. It is likely he is holding talk with heaven.

Margaret Rooney: (*To Coey.*) It is maybe you yourself took the shoes.

Coey: Let you stop putting a stain on my character. I that never put a farthing astray on anyone!

Margaret Rooney: What at all can I do to know is he living or dead. Or is he gone walking the round world barefoot!

Mrs. Coey: Hurry on and get news from that man is under the bush, before there might angels come would give him a horn and rise him through the sky!

Margaret Rooney: Saint or no saint, I'll drag an answer out of him!

(She goes to him, he moves away from her round bush. She takes hold of his shoulders.)

Coey: Ah, there will thunder fall on her!

(Hanrahan tries to escape but Margaret Rooney holds him and looks at his face.)

Margaret Rooney: Is it you, Owen, is in it! Oh what is it happened at all!

Coey: Will you hearken to her speaking to him as if he was some common man.

Margaret Rooney: Tell me now what parted you from your shoes and are you sound and well? . . . Answer me now. . . . I think you very dark not speaking to me. It would be no great load on you to say, "God bless you"! *(He keeps moving on, she holding and following him.)* Is it your spirit I am looking on, or your ghost?

Mrs. Coey: Look at how he will not let his eye rest upon a woman, the holy man!

Margaret Rooney: Get him to speak one word to me and you will earn my blessing! . . . Do

you not recognise me, Owen, and I standing in the pure daylight! . . . Don't now be making strange, but stretch over to the road to be chatting and talking like you used. . . .

Coey: He has lost the talk, I am telling you. It is but by signs he makes things known.

Mrs. Coey: It is that the people of this district are not worthy to hear his voice.

Margaret Rooney: Is it that you went wild and mad, finding the place so lonesome? What at all but that would cause you to go dumb?

Mrs. Coey: Have some shame on you. Can't you see he is not acquainted with you at all?

Margaret Rooney: Did there some disease fall upon you, or some sickness? Why wouldn't you come back with me, and I would tend you and find you a cure? . . . Let you answer me back, if it is but to spit at me! Is it that I vexed you in any way, and the stocking I mended with kind worsted covering your foot yet? . . . (*He draws it back.*) Is it to break my heart, you will? . . . Is it to put ridicule on me, and to be making a mockery of me you are? Letting on to be dumb! (*He weeps.*) I had great love for him and I thought he had love for me. (*She turns away. He is stretching out his arms to her when Mary Gillis comes on. Hanrahan breaks away, making a grab at boots, he sits down to put them on, making a face at her.*)

Is that yourself, Mary Gillis? It is in the nick of time you are come.

Mrs. Coey: (To Mary Gillis.) Give me back now the two shillings I paid you for that pair of shoes.

Margaret Rooney: Will you draw down on these fools of the world that this is no saint, but Owen Hanrahan?

Mrs. Coey: No, but she is under delusions! A man from God he is! Miracles he can do, and he living, and at the time he'll be dead there is apt to be great virtue in his bones.

Margaret Rooney: Tell them, can't you, that he is Owen Hanrahan?

Mary Gillis: (Puts arms akimbo.) And what is it makes you say this to be Owen Hanrahan?

Margaret Rooney: Are you gone cracked along with them?

Coey and Mrs. Coey: That's the chat! That's the chat!

Mary Gillis: There will a judgment come on you, Margy Rooney, for putting on a holy Christian, is dwelling in the blessed bed of a saint, the name of a vagabond heathen poet does be filling the long roads with his follies and his lies!

(Hanrahan scowls at her.)

Hanrahan's Oath

Coey: That's right! That's right! A great shame the name of this holy friar to be mixed with any sinful person at all.

Margaret Rooney: Is it the whole world has gone raging wild?

Mary Gillis: Hanrahan the poet is it? God bless your health! That is a man should not be spoken of in this saintly place. He is the greatest schemer ever God created! There is no beat to him! Putting lies on his own father and mother in Cappaghtagle! Letting his father be buried from the poorhouse that was gaoled for sheepstealing! Sure that one would hang the Pope!

(Hanrahan makes faces at her again.)

Margaret Rooney: Give over now cutting him down! *(Tries to put hand over her mouth.)*

Mary Gillis: *(Freeing herself.)* It is not dumb I am myself, the Lord be praised, the same as this holy man. And I say, if you must put a name on him, let it be the name of some poet worth while, such as Carolan or Virgil or Sweeney from Conne-mara. It is Sweeney that is great! *(Margaret Rooney tries to stop her, but she backs and goes on.)* It is himself can string words through the night-time. But as to poor Owen Hanrahan, it is in-

human songs he makes. Unnatural they are, without mirth or loveliness or joy or delight.

(Hanrahan writhes with anguish and makes threatening signs.)

You'd laugh your life out, listening to the way he was put down one time by Sweeney, the Connemara boy!

(Hanrahan throws himself down and bites the grass.)

Margaret Rooney: If you are Hanrahan, let you put her down under a poet's curse. And if you are a saint, let you make a grasshopper of her with the power of a saint!

Mary Gillis: It is bawneen flannel and clean, that dumb friar is wearing; but as to Owen Hanrahan, it is a stirabout poet he is, and greasy his coat is, with all the leavings he brings away from him and he begging his dinner from door to door.

(Hanrahan gets up and rushes at her. She shrieks and runs right. She knocks against Feeney who is coming on. Hanrahan stops short and goes quickly into cabin.)

Feeney: Mind yourself, woman! You all to had me knocked, barging and fighting and raising rings around you! I'll make you ask my pardon so sure as my name is Feeney!

Hanrahan's Oath

Mary Gillis: Michael Feeney is it? (*He nods.*)

Margaret Rooney: What is it brings you here?

Feeney: This is a place if you'd go astray, you'd go astray very quick in it. Crosscutting over the mountain I was, till I'd face back to my own place near Tuam. And I got word there is a friar from foreign here in some place, giving out preachings and absolutions.

Mrs. Coey: No, but a holy man that is in the cabin beyond. A great saint he is, out and out!

Feeney: That'll serve me as well, where I missed attending mass this fortnight back, where I was . . . travelling . . . In very backward places, I was. It is home I am facing now, and I'd sooner give out my confession to a stranger than to our own priest, might be questioning me where is my little mountain still, he being a Father Matthew man, that wouldn't so much as drink water out of a glass but from a teacup.

Coey: You did well coming to himself that can put no question to you at all.

Mrs. Coey: My grief that he cannot word out a rosary or give us newses of the fallen angels, being dumb and bereft of speech.

Feeney: That will suit me well, so long as his ears are not closed, and that he can get me free

from going to confession for another quarter of a year on this side of St. Martin's Day.

(He kneels at door.)

Margaret Rooney: (Trying to move him away.)
Do not be pushing on him where he might be in a sleep or a slumber.

Mrs. Coey: (Awed.) It is maybe away in a trance he might be, and the angels coming around him. It is in that way his miracles and wonders come to him.

Coey: (Getting behind him.) Mind yourself. He might likely burst demented out from his trance and destroy the world with one twist of the hand.

Mrs. Coey: He is bended now, holy father. Be so liberal as to reach your hand for the good of his soul.

Mary Gillis: It would maybe be right, the whole of us to go in and see is there a weakness come upon him with his fast.

(A hand is hurriedly stretched out.)

Feeney: (Having knelt a moment shouts:) What is that I see! I recognise that yellow patch! Owen Hanrahan's boot! *(Jumps up and drags.)* Come out now, out of that!

Margaret Rooney: Let you leave dragging him! *(Tries to stop him.)*

Feeney: (*Dragging him out with a loud laugh.*) Is it yourself, Owen Hanrahan, is setting up to be no less than a saint? Is it for sport or for gain you are working miracles and giving out benedictions?

Hanrahan: Is it not transported you are!

Feeney: Why should I be transported, without you would be wishful of it?

Hanrahan: Taken and judged and sent out to Van Dieman's Land!

Feeney: It is seemingly well pleased you would be, I to be there, and my neck in the hemp along with it.

Hanrahan: Is that the thanks you are giving me, for doing penance under dumbness, on the head of you being gaoled in a ship!

Feeney: Little you'd care, I to linger my life out on a treadmill or withering in a cell!

Hanrahan: Don't I tell you I am working out my repentance with the dint of my grief, where it was through my talk you were made a prisoner, and brought to the Court, and led away under chains, and blacks maybe beating you with whips.

Feeney: What are you raving about, making me out a rogue and putting that stain on my name, I that never stood in a court, or a dock, or was brought away in a ship, or ever rattled a chain, or put my head upon a block!

Hanrahan: Having the name of an informer put on me for your sake!

Feeney: Is it that you are after being an informer? Giving out to the world the hidden bog-hole where I have my still!

Hanrahan: I did not!

Feeney: And you lurking in a cleft and letting on to be wording your beads! But I'll knock satisfaction out of you. I'll have you baulked!

Hanrahan: It is likely the gauger gave it out!

Feeney: He wouldn't put the people against him saying that. A neighbour made me out and told me he swore he disremembered all that happened. Death and destruction on me, but he's a more honourable man than yourself!

Margaret Rooney: What have you against one another so?

Feeney: Blessed if I know.

Hanrahan: If I haven't anything against him, there are others I have it against. (*To Mary Gillis.*) Let you be ashamed and under grief, for the way you have us made fools of. It is up here in this cabin yourself has a right to stop for the centuries earning my forgiveness to the end of your life, sleeping in your pelt and scraping your bare feet on the rock, like myself was doing, and speechless, and without defence, the same as I was

myself, through the story you made up and the lies!

Margaret Rooney: That's the chat, Owen! That is yourself is come back to us!

Mrs. Coey: Well now, for a saint of silence hasn't he a terrible deal of talk?

Mary Gillis: As savage as a wasp out of a bottle he is! His talk is seven times sharper than before, and a holy terror to the whole world. I'll go call to the true friar at the Chapel to say are you not bound to silence for a year and a day by your oath!

Hanrahan: (*Putting arm round Margaret Rooney and shaking fist at Mary Gillis as he takes up his coat.*) You will, will you? Well I am not bound! How would I know, the time I took the oath in my lone, there would be schemers coming around me challenging and annoying me? It is yourself that broke the bond, following after me! And you have a great wrong done to me. The next time I will take an oath of silence it is in the market square I will take it, the night before the spring fair, and the pigs squealing from every paling and every car, and hawkers bawling, sooner than to be narrowed up on a crag where I cannot make my escape from the tongue of a woman that is more lasting than the sole of my shoe! It's bad behaviour you showed, with your lies, and a great

shame for you, and you being a widow and advanced out a while. It's a great wonder the Lord to stand the villainy is in you! I'll make you go easy! The time you rose me out of my senses, tearing away my character, and I being dumb, I had myself promised I would make a world's wonder of you in the bye and bye, and my year and a day being passed! You disgrace, you! The curse of my heart on you! Go on now, you withered sloe bush, you cranky crab fish, you hag, you rap, you vagabond! May your day not thrive with you, and that you may be seven hundred times crosser this time next year, and it is good curses I'll be making, and the first I'll put on you is the curse of dumbness, for that is the last curse of all!

NOTE TO HANRAHAN'S OATH

I think it was seeing a performance of "The Dumb Wife" in New York, and having a memory of Molière's Lucinde, that made me wonder how it would fare with a man forced to be silent in the same way. I do not count Jonson's *Epicœne*, for he had been with much labour trained for the part. So Hanrahan, poet and talker, borrowed from Mr. Yeats' "Celtic Twilight," took the sudden plunge into silence.

I have looked back into an old copybook where I began the writing, and I see that Mary Gillis was at the first given more of the argument, and told him that "To speak lets the bad blood out of you, the same as to vomit, and leaves the soul clean"; and "it is worse to have bad thoughts than bad words, and to be cursing and damning in the mind." And I see also I had written for my own guidance that "it is after reaching the height of sanctity the fall is greatest"; and "how far the carrying out comes short of the imagining!" And this last I found true in the writing of the play, as Hanrahan did in the keeping of his vow.

SHANWALLA

LAWRENCE SCARRY *A Stableman.*
 HUBERT DARCY *His Master.*
 BRIDE SCARRY *His Wife.*
 OWEN CONARY *A Blind Beggar.*
 PAT O'MALLEY
 JAMES BROGAN
 1ST GIRL
 2ND GIRL
 HEAD CONSTABLE
 1ST POLICEMAN
 2ND POLICEMAN
 A BOY

SHANWALLA

ACT I

An old harness room, with bridles etc. Conary is sitting at fire, has just finished a meal and is putting down mug and plate, awkwardly. Bride Scarry is sitting on table, working at bodice of a dress.

Conary: Many is the place where you stretched out your hand to me, Bride Scarry; over the mering in Clare the time you had a harbour with the Brogans that were of your kin; and after that when you shifted over to Pat O'Malley that was of your kin; and after that again when you took service in the big house of the Darcys. And anything you would bring to me, if it was but a potato itself I would be sure of it, and I had no need to go sniffing the same as a yard dog to know was the bit sweet or stinking, wholesome or harmful, was thrust into the hand of the man is blind and defeated in the sight. Another thing, I am well pleased with the meal you gave me this day, knowing it to be your own, and you free from

service and this fortnight back the woman of Lawrence Scarry's house, and having your own handling and your way.

Bride: Was it not a great kindness he did, Owen Conary, taking me for his wife, and I having nothing in my hand and not so much as good friends would be a back to him. I'm in dread it is no good helper I can be to him at all.

Conary: He is well off getting you; for you are one that was born at sunrise and at the birthday of the year. But it is yourself and myself were under near the one misfortune up to this, I being a beggar and poor that must strive to please all and to humour them, trying to knock out the bite I'd eat; and you being a girl under orders in whatever house you were in, and having no leave to please yourself at any time, and not knowing in the moon of May what roof might be giving you shelter in the moon of the badgers.

Bride: That was so indeed, and I should be well content.

Conary: A man to care you, and he an honest boy in favour with his master, and plenty to have come into your hand, there is little left now for you to covet or desire.

Bride: It's hard say. I do be thinking at some times if I owned some grandeur such as a flock of

hens, or a flower garden, it would make me more settled in the world. But having them maybe I might be craving after something would be better again. (*Laughs.*)

Conary: That was the way with myself in my early time. I used to be hungering and hoping to see so much as one human face before I'd die. But since I went so far I am satisfied to wait till the walls of this world will be broke for me, and I will get a view of them that have lost the body and are upon the other side.

Bride: You to see such things at this time itself it would be natural, for those that are blind should see more than such as have their earthly sight. They do be saying one of Mr. Darcy's old fathers does be seen around this place, as it is here he kept his horses and his hounds.

Conary: So he might be seen. A great rider he was, sitting up straight on his white horse that had the name of some castle out in foreign, in Germany I think it is, Iron Brightside. Many a one has seen him galloping through the demesne in the night time, and the huntsman with him in his red jacket riding.

Bride: There is Larry would not give in to such things. But surely the priests know there are ghosts, and tell you they are poor souls that died in trouble.

Conary: The shadow that wanders for a while until it has the debts paid it had to pay. And when it is free it puts out wings and flies to heaven.

Bride: There was a woman from the North used to be telling me that every time you see a tree shaking there is a ghost in it.

Conary: When one goes that has a weight on the soul that is more than the weight of the body, it cannot get away, but stays wandering till some one has courage to question it.

Bride: That is what the woman told me. To have courage to question them you must, or they will have no power for to speak.

Conary: I knew one Kearney met a woman, a stranger. "Is there anything I can do for you?" says he, for he thought she was some country-woman gone astray. "There is," says she. And she told him of some small debts she had left unknown to her friends, not more than ten shillings in all, and when she died no more had been said about it. So her friends paid these and said masses, and shortly after she appeared to him again. "God bless you now," she said, "for what you did for me, for now I am at peace." But if Kearney did not question her, she would not have power to tell what ailed her. And it is certain that a mother will come back to care the child that is left after her.

Bride: I never saw my mother that was taken at the very hour of my birth. ·

Conary: It is likely she had a hand in you; for a child that gets help from the other side will grow to be the best in the world.

Bride: They must surely be uneasy about those they left after them, or why would they quit for one minute only that good place where they are gone.

Conary: Coming back to give help, that is what they do be doing. Believe me, if it is good to have friends among the living, it is seven times better to have them among the dead.

Bride: Whist now! Larry will say no one will be talking of such things unless it might be a woman or a fool!

Scarry: (*Coming in.*) Is that you Owen Conary keeping the woman of the house in talk?

Conary: (*Changing manner.*) Myself it is, Lawrence Scarry! Calling to mind I was the grandeurs of this place in the long ago, the time the Darcys' hounds would be putting a fox in trouble! (*Sings.*)

Hark, hark, the sounds increase
Each horn sounds a bass
Away to Chevy Chase
Poor Reynard is in view;

All round the sunny lake
Lough Cutra then he takes
But they without mistake
His footsteps did pursue.
'Twas on Ballyturn hill
Poor Reynard made his will . . .

Scarry: Stop your noise now and get out of sight. I saw the Master coming and he crossing the bridge!

Bride: Come with me Owen till I'll lead you to where there is a warm wad of straw in the shed beyond. You can rest yourself there for a while. You might miss your step if I brought you up the ladder into the loft.

(They go out.)

Scarry: That's it, put him out of sight in some place. *(He takes bit and stirrups and rubs them with a chamois leather, humming as if grooming a horse.)*

Darcy: *(At door.)* Are you there Larry?

Scarry: I am, sir.

Darcy: *(Coming in.)* What way is the horse today?

Scarry: Grand, sir. Grand out and out.

Darcy: I'd be here sooner but for having to attend the Bench in Cloon. Magistrates are scarce these times.

Scarry: There's good daylight yet. You can take a view of him.

Darcy: (*Going to side and opening door comes back, shutting it.*) He doesn't look too bad.

Scarry: Is that all you have to say? He's altogether a beauty!

Darcy: Oh, Larry, do you think can he win in the race?

Scarry: He to fail I'll give you leave to do your choice thing on me.

Darcy: There will be good horses against him.

Scarry: There's a good breed in him. Never fear he'll best them.

Darcy: That dealer in Limerick owns a bay mare has a great name.

Scarry: You may bet your estate on Shanwalla.

Darcy: That mare won all before her at Turloghmore.

Scarry: Shanwalla that will get the victory over all Ireland.

Darcy: You are likely making too much of him.

Scarry: There's no one can go stronger than him, and you to be trotting him itself; and as gentle as that you could bridle him with the ashes of a spent thread of silk.

Darcy: It would frighten you to see the leaps they are putting up on the course.

Scarry: There isn't a leap in any part would baulk *him*.

Darcy: It will be a fierce race, a fierce pace.

Scarry: I'll pity them that will make their start with Shanwalla! They to try and catch him, he'll take the cracked strain, and away with him.

Darcy: He to win I'll have my pocket well filled. And believe me, you'll be no loser.

Scarry: It's time indeed you to do some good thing for me, and I wedded and joined with a wife.

Darcy: It wasn't I that bade you take a wife.

Scarry: It was you put me stopping in this bare barrack of a deserted old kennel, till I near died with the lonesome.

Darcy: Well you have company now, whatever complaints she may put out of her.

Scarry: The time she was a poor serving girl in your own kitchen she was better treated than to be housed under rafters in a loft.

Darcy: A loft is an airy place.

Scarry: A loft the crows wouldn't stop in, but to be going in and out of it with the breeze.

Darcy: It to be airy you will not be stopping in it wasting your time of a morning.

Scarry: It is gone to rack too. It was made since God made the world. It's as old as Adam.

There's a great traffic in it of rats, till they have it holed like a sieve.

Darcy: Holes are very handy for you to be looking down into the manger to see is Shanwalla eating his feed.

Scarry: And no way to go up in it but only a rickety ladder does be shaking like a bough in a big wind.

Darcy: That is great good. It will keep you sober more than if you gave your oath to the missionaries. You would be in dread to go face it and you after taking a drop.

Scarry: I tell you I wouldn't care if I had to climb a rope to the skies if it wasn't for my woman of a wife.

Darcy: I'm not too well pleased with you Larry for bringing in a companion till after the race would be won. Take care would she be chattering about the horse.

Scarry: You need be in no dread. Wise head and shut mouth. That's the way with her.

Darcy: I wouldn't wish her to be bringing company around the place.

Scarry: No fear of her coveting to ask any person to come see the poor way she is lodged.

Darcy: That's a good reason to keep you down. I have no mind anyone to come peeping and prying,

striving to see him and to give out a report of him.

Scarry: There is no one will get any sight of him till such time as he will come sparkling on to the course, and he tossing his head, like as if you were pitching buttons.

Darcy: Take care would you let anyone come next or near him.

Scarry: I know my business better than that.

Darcy: Give no one leave to touch or to handle him. It is a little thing would put a horse astray.

Scarry: Ah, horses in this country is a hardy class. They wouldn't die through swallowing a buttercup the same as they do out in France.

Darcy: It's impossible to be too careful.

Scarry: It wasn't myself lamed the chestnut, leaping on to the road, that the sinews spread on him.

Darcy: It's not of making leaps I am afraid. There are other things might lame him such as a thorn in the knee.

Scarry: He got no thorns under my care.

Darcy: A hayseed in the eye might bring blindness on him.

Scarry: It might, and my own eyes being blind.

Darcy: A prick of a nail.

Scarry: He's done with shoeing for this time.

Darcy: A pinch of some poison in the drinking water.

Scarry: Without they'd poison the whole river it would fail them to bring that about.

Darcy: I tell you I'll be easier in my mind when next Friday will be passed.

Scarry: So you would be too. It's best not praise or dispraise a crop before the June will be out.

Darcy: I am wakeful fearing for him in the night time.

Scarry: I wonder you wouldn't shift him over to your own yard and you being so uneasy.

Darcy: I wouldn't say but it might be best.

Scarry: Do it so, and I'll get my sound sleep.

Darcy: He might get cold in the new stable.

Scarry: Let him wear his blanket.

Darcy: Sure enough, there's no eye like the master's.

Scarry: I often heard you say that.

Darcy: It's hard trust anyone.

Scarry: Please yourself.

Darcy: It might not be worth while for the short time till the race.

Scarry: This is Tuesday. There's three days to it yet.

Darcy: Wait till I'll take another look at him.

Scarry: Look here now Master Hubert. You'll bring him out of this tonight or I myself will go out of it.

Darcy: What are you talking about?

Scarry: I will not stop in charge of him, and I not to be trusted.

Darcy: Who said you were not trusted?

Scarry: You said it now.

Darcy: I did not.

Scarry: I say that you did.

Darcy: That's a big lie.

Scarry: Your own is bigger 'again.

Darcy: That's no way to speak to me.

Scarry: I'll put up with it no longer.

Darcy: All right so. You can go tomorrow.

Scarry: I'll go here and now.

Darcy: You cannot till tomorrow. I have no one to care the horse tonight.

Scarry: Where is the trainer you had engaged?

Darcy: That's nothing to you. You have to keep charge till morning.

Scarry: Let him earn the big money he is paid.

Darcy: You know well he is gone this fortnight.

Scarry: Let you send and call him back.

Darcy: He is gone for good and all.

Scarry: My share of trouble with him! It's little we'll cry after him, myself and Shanwalla.

Darcy: Go your own road tomorrow but you cannot quit my service till then.

Scarry: If I do stop it is not to oblige you Mr. Darcy, but because I have a great regard for that horse.

Darcy: All right! We'll say good-bye to one another in the morning. I've stood enough of you and of your tongue! (*Goes.*)

Scarry: Ah, my joy go with you! (*Sings ostentatiously:*)

The lands he did forsake, and swam across the
lake

But to his great mistake the hounds kept him in
view,

Our County Galway joy

Is Persse of Castleboy . . .

(*Brogan and O'Malley come in.*)

O'Malley: Fine evening, Lawrence.

Scarry: Is that you Pat O'Malley? Is it up from Limerick you are after coming, James Brogan?

Brogan: Going on to the fair of Loughrea I am, where I have business with a dealer from Cappaghtagle.

O'Malley: We just called in to see what way yourself and Bride agree together. It is what

they were telling me, your life is like marriage bells.

Brogan: We were waiting beyond behind the little wall of bushes till Darcy would be gone. You might not be well pleased he to have seen us.

Scarry: Little I'd care he to see you or not to see you!

O'Malley: They are saying he gives you no leave so much as to cross the threshold of the door.

Brogan: There is surely some great treasure in this old kennel of a place that he has no mind to let slip from him. His eyes stuck to the window and his ears to the hinges of the lock.

Scarry: Whatever he does I had enough of it! I have a mind to break out loose and let the whole world get a view of that great treasure at the fair of Loughrea tomorrow!

Brogan: Is that the way with you? But you'd be in dread of him to do it.

Scarry: I'm in no dread of him. It is his most enemy I would make welcome on this night.

O'Malley: I thought he had a great smack for you. Ye that were two comrade lads in your young days, as near as the tree to the bark.

Scarry: He went too far in the way he went on. I have a temper of my own. There's an end of my service in this place.

Brogan: (*Sitting down.*) I wonder now is the horse as good as what they say?

Scarry: He's good enough.

Brogan: Darcy is in dread they were telling me of letting so much as shadow be seen on the wall in any place there might be humans passing.

O'Malley: A foolish man, a foolish man. It is not putting a wall around the field will stop the cuckoo from quitting it.

(Bride comes in. She has put on the dress she had been working at, and dressed her hair. She is startled when she sees guests.)

Bride: Is that yourself, Pat? I didn't know there was anyone in it.

O'Malley: Is it so. And here is another kinsman of your own that you didn't see this good while. A great pity it failed him to come to the wedding and the dance.

Brogan: Will you give me a welcome, Bride?

Bride: It is my custom to give a welcome to all that come in at Lawrence Scarry's door.

Scarry: Well now aren't you very dressed out today more than any other day?

O'Malley: It is the wedding-dress she is wearing sure enough.

Bride: I was putting a few wilts in it where it was too wide and I am after fitting it on.

O'Malley: Thinking to wear it you are I suppose on the day of the Inchy races.

Bride: I am, so long as the weather will be good. I would not wish the rain to interfere with the flowers (*Strokes dress.*)

Brogan: Grandeur and finery to be so plentiful with you it is a great wonder you not to have silk shoes on your feet.

Scarry: So she will have them, and a suit of changing colours, that she will be laughing with the delight of them.

O'Malley: I wonder you to go handle that skil-let that might spoil the neatness of your gown.

Bride: Put it on the fire, you, Lawrence, where you'll be in need of a drop of warm water, for it is time for you give Shanwalla his feed. (*Goes.*)

Brogan: Shanwalla! That is a name is well known through the five provinces!

Scarry: There's little known about him yet.

Brogan: More maybe than you think.

Scarry: No one saw him since he came back from the trainer. It is within in the demesne he gets his exercise since then.

Brogan: If they didn't see him they heard of him.

Scarry: I gave out nothing or spoke his name at all since the time he was brought back into my charge.

Brogan: There is maybe one that did speak.

Scarry: Who was that?

Brogan: The man that owns him.

Scarry: You're out. It is he himself forbade me to let one word about him out of my mouth.

O'Malley: There are other ways of giving out news besides with the tongue. To be looking down as if there was a secret between yourself and the depths of the earth, and to be whispering with yourself and starting, and to be giving little hints about some thing you could tell if you had a mind; and to be as if deaf and dumb every time the race is so much as spoken of. That's what makes the lads that meet him full sure he has the winner in his hand. There's not a man within the seven counties but has got wind of him.

Brogan: Whether or no, it's impossible at this time to get any odds against Shanwalla.

O'Malley: Did you put anything on him yourself, Lawrence?

Scarry: I did not. Where would I meet with anyone to make bets with? I was hoping for good odds.

Brogan: You're hoping for what you won't get. There is but one way for you to make your profit on the race.

Scarry: The one way is to back him.

Brogan: It is not, but to bet against him.

Scarry: He will surely win.

Brogan: That was said of many a horse that it failed after to get the goal.

Scarry: There'll be no failing in him. The jockey is one that will ride him steady and will not let him renage.

O'Malley: I knew a man out in Athlone had not so much as a red halfpenny, and it was a horse he backed at Mullingar races, and that had no great name, put a large fortune into his hand.

Brogan: I remember the race. It was a grey was the favourite, Hill of Allen is the name was on him. There was no other horse fit to come near him.

O'Malley: My man that bet against him.

Scarry: What way did he win so?

Brogan: He had knowledge of the horse and that he was fidgety at the start—nervous like—till he'd set out. So he made objection to every start that was made, till he had him dancing wild, rearing up to the skies, and flakes flying from his bit. By the time the real start was made, in place

of going forward it is a side leap he made, and threw the jockey, and no more about him.

Scarry: That was a very roguish thing to do.

O'Malley: Ah what roguish! If God allotted riches for some people and allotted more to be in poverty, it is best for a man to look out for himself. That man I tell you had debts down on him, and since that time he grew into riches and is his own master.

Brogan: No one putting orders on him to go there or hither, and no need ever to humble himself to another.

Scarry: The man that would make me an offer to do a trick of the sort it would be the worst day ever went over him. It's a thing I wouldn't listen to from the Queen under her crown.

Brogan: Ah, by your own telling, Darcy doesn't give you such good treatment you should be slaving your life out for him the way you do.

Scarry: Whatever I do for him this is the last night I'll be doing it. The horse will be going to his own stables in Ravahasy tomorrow.

O'Malley: Is it that this is the last night you have charge of him?

Scarry: That's what I said. And I'll take good charge of him. There's no enemy will make any

headway putting *him* astray. I'll stop waking with him through the night time.

Brogan: We'll stop along with you. I have here a pack of cards.

O'Malley: There's a drop here in the bottle I have. You won't feel the time passing.

Scarry: I'll be best stopping alone. The night is not long passing since the days took a stretch.

Brogan: It's more likely sleep will come upon you than if you would be taking a hand with the cards.

Scarry: I'll bid Bride to put down black tea for me that will keep me waking. The tea is very lively.

O'Malley: That is a poor thing to go drink. It will set the heart uneasy and leaping within you.

Scarry: (*Pointing to door.*) Well, boys, I'll put you on your road as far as the river, where I'll be getting a pail of pure water in the pool that is below the bridge. The skillet is on the boil that I can take the chill off of it. It is time for the horse get his feed.

Brogan: I'll engage it is good feeding he is getting. What is it you are giving him?

Scarry: Everything of the best.

O'Malley: There's some says new milk to be very serviceable.

Scarry: Ah, it's not fattening a pig I am. I wouldn't go as far as that. But meal and water and good oats having mixed up with them an odd time a couple of fresh eggs.

O'Malley: That's great diet, God bless him!

Brogan: How often now would you give him that in the day?

Scarry: Three times, and no muzzle but to let him measure his own belly. It's a poor thing to send a horse out hungry to a race.

O'Malley: A naggin' of whiskey is a thing now I saw give great courage at the start.

Brogan: There was a red mare I used to be with throve on nothing so well as split peas. A great horse—she'd ate you if she had a foal.

Scarry: The oats we have is as hard as any sort of peas you could meet. It was harvested in the heat of last August two years.

Brogan: Is that it within in the sack?

Scarry: It is not, but within in the bin it is.

Brogan: A lock on it the same as if it was coined gold. I suppose Darcy gives it out himself?

Scarry: He does not. (*Unlocks it.*)

Brogan: (*Looking in.*) And the sieve locked up along with it.

Scarry: That's the master's orders. And Bride that has to scald it every day.

Brogan: (*Fingering oats.*) It is seemingly middling good.

Scarry: Ah, what middling? Sure it weighs near fifty pound to the bushel. (*Shakes sieve.*) Do you hear it rattling the same as grains of shot?

Brogan: Will you be giving it to him now?

Scarry: I will not till I'll have the water drawn and give him a drink. I must go get it now.

Brogan: I'd like well to get one view of him. Open now the door.

Scarry: I will not do that. He's someway nervous; he to be aware of a stranger late or early it would startle and disturb him.

Brogan: I am well used to handling horses.

Scarry: You wouldn't handle this one. You to go in to him offering to give him a feed or a drink, you should keep your seven yards out from him or you'd get his hocks in your face!

O'Malley: He must be very violent and hurtful.

Scarry: It's only with strangers he does be that way. The minute he'll feel them coming he'll show a very roguish eye. But as to myself, he'd give me leave to let off gunpowder in his manger, or to squeal the bagpipes around his stall.

O'Malley: It is given in to Brogan that he has a way with him.

Scarry: The trainer himself would not get leave to comb his mane or his tail. It's the work of the world to get a blacksmith with courage to put a shoe on him. Come on now, it's time for me draw the water.

Brogan: (Sitting down.) I'll follow you. I should take out of my shoe a pebble that preyed on me and I coming the road.

Scarry: (At door.) Hurry on so. I'm waiting.

O'Malley: Is that now the old forge is in the corner of the yard?

Scarry: It is, and there used to be two smiths working in it every day of the year.

O'Malley: The bellows should be broke by this. Or is there a bellows in it at all?

Scarry: The handle is in it,—wait till I'll show you.

(They go out, Scarry taking pail.)

Brogan: (Calling out) I'll be after ye! *(Gets up, looks out door, takes lid off the saucepan. Takes a couple of small packets wrapped in blue paper from his pocket. Puts one back and shakes contents of other into saucepan. Bride Scarry has come to other door, and stands looking at him.)*

Bride: What is that you are doing, James Brogan?

Brogan: (Startled) I am following after Lawrence that went on to the bridge.

Bride: (*Going between him and door*) I saw you putting some thing into the skillet.

Brogan: There's some see more than is in it to see. It is your sight that spread on you.

Bride: I am surer of my own sight, James Brogan, than I am of your word.

Brogan: Is it since you joined with the Scarrys you are grown so proud to be running down your own breed?

Bride: It is well I know, whatever brought you here, you are at no good trade.

Brogan: Is it to rob you think me to be come? I see no great sign of riches about the place. It is to a better house than this I would go and I searching out profit for myself. I tell you Bride Scarry for all your pride it is no great match that you made.

Bride: I got an honest man, and that is what you never were yourself. For you did not deal right and fair with them that trusted you and employed you.

Brogan: It is you yourself drove me from honest ways the time you turned your own face against me.

Bride: My face was against you from the time I knew your ugly behaviour, an army man—a deserter—I know what it was brought you into

Liverpool gaol. I tell you I am well satisfied having my face turned towards a better man.

Brogan: You could have made a good man of me and a well doing man if you had but taken me in hand. I give you my oath you are the only woman was ever shut up in my heart.

Bride: Do you think with this foolish talk to turn me from what I saw? I know well you have the mischief in your mind.

Brogan: Is it living near Darcy has put these suspicions into you?

Bride: It is not, but only what I know about yourself.

Brogan: What high notions you have learned since you quitted Munster? A great judge you are of good or bad, as if you were the biggest in the world!

Bride: It is Lawrence will judge your behaviour. I will tell him what I saw. How do I know was it to do him some injury you put that—whatever it was—into the water.

Brogan: You'll tell him no such thing.

Bride: I will, and let you make out your own case.

Brogan: Didn't you get very cross and bold! Your voice raised and shrill the same as some fierce woman in a fight!

Bride: It is he will take you in hand so soon as he will come back.

Brogan: Whatever I may want to do, never fear I'll do it in the spite of his teeth!

Bride: I will bring all your bad deeds to light!

Brogan: You are making a great mistake! Give me your promise to be quiet or I'll gag your mouth. I'll master you!

Bride: You might not get leave to do that. It is the Almighty is our master in everything.

Brogan: You need not think to escape me! I'll come down on you! I'll put right fear on you. I'll make you go easy from this out—I'll banish you out of the world.

Bride: God will not forgive you those threats.

Brogan: I'll destroy Lawrence along with you!

Bride: Living or dead I'll be against you, and you trying to do injury to my man! (*Brogan clutches her, she calls out*) Lawrence! Lawrence!

Brogan: I'll put you under the clay! I'll have the life of you.

Bride: (*Trying to free herself*) It is hard to quench life!

Darcy: (*Calling from the yard*) Are you calling Lawrence, Mrs. Scarry? He's not here.

Brogan: (*Releasing her*) It's Darcy! What way will I get out of this!

Bride: You can go out the coach-house door. I'll give you time to escape, and let you never let me see one sight of you again! (*Brogan goes*)

(*Bride puts lid on kettle, puts it aside.*)

Darcy: (*Coming in*) Where is Larry?

Bride: He'll be here, sir, in a minute.

Darcy: Did he tell you he had a falling out with me this morning?

Bride: He did not, sir.

Darcy: He is too short in his temper.

Bride: That would be a pity.

Darcy: He is too full of suspicions.

Bride: I wouldn't think that.

Darcy: The minute I say a word he thinks I mean more than is in it, and up with him like a bursting bottle, that you daren't go near him or speak reason to him.

Bride: Oh you could, sir. He has a great respect for you.

Darcy: So have I a great respect for him. But I am not without a spirit of my own, and some of these days he'll maybe go too far.

Bride: He would be sorry to do that.

Darcy: Well now if you wish to help him——

Bride: That is my wish indeed, to be a helper to him.

Darcy: I'd be glad you to keep a watch on him, and to quieten him down any time he will be getting these high notions into his head, and make him keep that sharp tongue of his in order.

Bride: I will do that, sir. He would be sorry to give you any annoyance. He thinks the world and all of you.

Darcy: And another thing. Any time he might be cross or have a drop taken, or be anyway put out at all, let you keep him out of my way, for I'd be sorry to have words with him again, or any quarrel at all.

Scarry: (*Coming in with pail*) Give me here the skillet, Bride.

Bride: (*Taking it and holding it behind her*) I have to heat some more water.

Scarry: What is in it will do.

Bride: It will not. (*She pours it into a pan and puts on shelf*) It won't take only a minute. There is the big kettle you can pour some in.

Scarry: (*Pouring and putting on fire*) Hurry on now. Did you bring the eggs?

Bride: I have a couple in the loft, I'll go get them.

Scarry: (*Sarcastically*) Let you hurry so, till Mr. Darcy will be satisfied we are not neglecting his horse.

Darcy: It's not that brought me. I'll not be stopping.

Bride: Do not go sir, till I will come back. I have a thing that must be told out, and that it is right for you to hear.

Scarry: Go do your business now, and don't mind talking till you'll come back (*Pushes her out half playfully*). *Then stoops, takes up paper Brogan had thrown in ashes, takes dip candle out of a tin candlestick, puts paper under to steady it and puts back on mantleshelf*).

Darcy: You were put out Larry a while ago at me saying I was uneasy about the horse.

Larry: He is your own property.

Darcy: That's not it, but there are things you don't understand.

Scarry: It's likely enough I have bad understanding.

Darcy: There's a bad class of people going through the world.

Scarry: I don't need understanding to know that much.

Darcy: Have done with humbugging. I have been given sure information that there will be an attempt made against Shanwalla.

Scarry: Let them do their best. The ruffians!

Darcy: Do you see now that it is best to bring him over to my own yard? But I depend on you to come along with him. I have no one I could trust him with but yourself.

Scarry: I'll come so. But why didn't you tell me that in the commencement?

Darcy: You'll come now, tonight?

Scarry: I cannot until morning, till I'll ready a lodging there beyond for the wife.

Darcy: Come early so, before there will be people moving about. Here is the key of the stable. I have another for my own use. Don't let it out of your own hand!

Scarry: (*Putting key on a nail.*) I will come at the brink of dawn.

Darcy: There is some noise like a fall.

Scarry: It is likely the rats. You would swear at some times there to be armies battling in the house.

Darcy: Like a little scream I thought I heard.

Scarry: You'd hear every class of noise in this place. There's no doubt but rats are a terror. I don't know why is it they are in the world at all.

Conary: (*Bursting door open*) Come out here for the love of God, Lawrence Scarry, and see what has happened your wife! (*Lawrence rushes out.*)

Darcy: (*Seizing Conary*) What is the matter? What has happened? Where is she?

Conary: Out there abroad on the stones. A fall I heard. (*Scarry rushes out.*)

Conary: And like a little cry. . . . I made my way to it from the shed where I was . . . and my foot struck against something that was the ladder that had fallen to the ground.

(*A low cry heard outside.*)

Darcy: My God!

Conary: I stooped down my hand, and I felt a little head that I knew to be her head, and I raised it up but it fell back this way (*Makes sign with hand*) on the flags. . . . What is this that is wet on my palm?

Darcy: It is blood.

Scarry: (*Coming in with her body in his arms*).
Make way for her! She is gone out of our hand!
(*Lays her down.*)

Darcy: My God! That cannot be!

Scarry: (*Kneels and lays his head on her breast.*)
O Bride! My darling and my first love!

Conary: (*Kneeling*)

Brigit, break the battle of death before her!

Let the cloak of Mary be under her head!

Come young Michael lead her by the hand

To the country of the angels, to the white

Court of Christ!

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene: Two days later. Same as last, but a settle bed in the room. There are bottles and pipes lying about, and ends of five large candles in brass candlesticks. Scarry is sitting by the fire with head in hands. O'Malley comes in.

O'Malley: It should ease your mind, Lawrence, the wake to be over and all to have passed so nice and so comfortable. (*Pauses but Scarry is silent.*) Ah, no wonder you to be lonesome and lonesome looking! Very sudden she went indeed; never a word out of her they were telling me, from the time you brought her from where she was lying on the stones and laid her down upon the floor. (*Another pause.*) But there is no one but must say you did your best for her, living or dead, putting a good coffin on her and leaving her down with her own people in the graveyard of Eserkelly. And everyone is talking of the wake—nothing scarce in it but all plentiful. But with all the drink was in it there was no leaping or playing or funning, for there was no one but was sorry for her. Is it a fact now that Darcy himself sent provision from

the big house, even to the five white candles that were kindled and burning around her? (*Scarry nods.*) Well it was a mournful thing to happen, but we cannot have our own way always, and you have a right not to neglect yourself, but to give over fretting, for it's likely you have a long life before you.

Scarry: (*With a bitter laugh.*) A long life is it? That is a thing my most enemy would wish to me.

O'Malley: Ah, your grief will wear itself out after a while, where it was the will of God.

Scarry: (*With another laugh.*) That's the talk of women and of fools! And why would God have any spite against me more than any other one?

O'Malley: Well there's no one at all, they do be saying, but is deserving of some punishment from the very minute of his birth.

Scarry: And is it for the sin of the apple you are drawing down that curse upon me? There is no fair play in that.

O'Malley: Sure it is allotted to every Christian to meet with his share of trouble.

Scarry: It is a bad lot that fell upon myself! It is no way fair trouble to have been settled for me in the clouds of the sky at the time I made my first start in the world.

O'Malley: You maybe did some contrary deed yourself, without putting blame upon the skies.

Scarry: I tell you I made no bad deed to drag me down more than another. I was no robber or treacherous friend! I harmed no person young or old or did this or that! I coveted no gift from the riches of the kings of the earth, or broke the bars of the treasury of heaven!

O'Malley: Ah, where's the use of talking?

Scarry: God to have any grudge against me wouldn't it be enough to let it fall on myself and not to leave it on my companion to pay the penalty? What call had the armies of heaven to bring away the woman had no sharpness in her mouth? It is a great loss to the world that little laugh to be banished out of it!

O'Malley: It will not serve you to be roaring and running this way and that way like a mare would be screeching after her foal athrough the rocks.

Scarry: What way did it fail the harm to fall on the horse was in it and that I took delight in? Hadn't he a name big enough to satisfy the pride and the covetousness of death? Oh, Bride, my heart is linked to you yet, that you could draw me to the ends of the grey world!

O'Malley: Lie down now on the bed and take your rest, where you never closed an eye the two

nights since she went from you. It is the passion of sleep that has you racked and that is turning you to be mad and wild.

Scarry: (*Stumbles over to side of bed, then turns back.*) What way would I lie in my warmth, and she being frosty cold in Eserkelly, and a made grave all that is left to her!

O'Malley: There is no one but will tell you that you will surely come to her again, on the far side of the world.

Scarry: There is no world of the living on the far side! That is a deception and a vanity! She to be living she would not leave me my lone, if she had to break through the flags of the floor of heaven! We to die there is nothing left of us but as if a breeze of wind that is passed away, and no more about it.

O'Malley: Take but one half hour's sleep I say, and your senses will come back to you and your reason.

Scarry: I wish to God you could put me in my sleep for seven years or seven quarters of the year itself! That would be very good. Is there drink enough left in the wake-house to bring down sleep and forgetfulness? (*Seizes bottle and pours into a pewter mug, then puts it down again.*) Oh, Bride, what am I saying? What way can I lie down in my sleep when it is far from you will be my wak-

ing? There is nothing will befriend me only death—my life to burn out in a minute the same as the tails the children do be kindling in the barley gardens! It will be best let it out from me with some little sharp bit of iron! (*Goes to door.*)

Brogan: (*Who has been at door for a moment or two comes in.*) Here let you sit down. (*Pushes over mug to him.*) Drink it now. It's little but you'll fall in your standing with the weakness. (*Pushes him into chair.*) Have courage man! You are shaking like the tree of the Crucifixion! (*Scarry drinks.*)

O'Malley: That's right. It will bring the senses back into him.

Brogan: (*Sits down and lights pipe.*) Tell me now, Pat O'Malley, what way is the world shaping? Have you any new tidings of the big races of Inchy tomorrow?

O'Malley: Sure there is no talk of any other thing. There is quality gathered into all the big gentlemen's houses.

Brogan: Would you say now Shanwalla to be the favourite yet?

O'Malley: Why wouldn't he be the favourite? He's a great sort. He is far beyond any one of the blood horses will be in it.

Brogan: You heard nothing against him I suppose?

O'Malley: Sure there is nothing can be brought against him. You know that before.

Brogan: A touch of the strangles they were telling me he has got. It's a bad thing to get quit of or to cure.

Scarry: That's a damned lie they told you saying that. He never had any such a thing.

Brogan: Ah, it's hard to believe all the lies that is in the world. I suppose you didn't see him since he went out of your care?

Scarry: I did not.

O'Malley: I got a sketch of him myself that night, the night of the misfortune that came on this place. It was Darcy himself was leading him away by the river path. It was Lawrence Scarry had more hand in him than any trainer or tribe of trainers. He behaved very mean doing that.

Scarry: He did not. He behaved fair and square to me.

Brogan: That's very good. It is the neighbours I heard talking, saying that he someway mistrusted you.

Scarry: He behaved good and honest. He said to me to move over to his own yard so soon as I

would have done . . . this business here. It is there I should be going at this time.

Brogan: They are saying he tried to bring back the trainer from the Curragh in your place, and that he would give you no more leave to attend the horse.

Scarry: Little they know, so full as they are of fancies.

Brogan: Well, I'm only telling you what is said.

Scarry: (*Taking key from nail.*) Look at that key? Do you know what is it?

Brogan: What way would I know?

Scarry: It is the key of Shanwalla's stable beyond. Darcy gave it into my hand, and he gave with it full leave to go in at any minute of the night or day. Was that now mistrusting me?

Brogan: (*Touching key.*) You are not telling me he did that much?

Scarry: He knows well the love I have for that horse! I'll like well to see the way he'll put defeat on the whole rout of them!

Brogan: That's right! Go see the race to-morrow. You'll get some life in you with the shouting of the crowds upon the course.

Scarry: (*Drinking again.*) Shouting "Shanwalla" they will be! It is I will give out my own

shout. I'll lay my bets with the best of them. I'm not put out yet!

Brogan: That's it! . . . There's no one on the course will make bigger money than what you will, and you to take courage in your hand.

Scarry: Money? What would I want getting money! I would not stoop my back for it, and it to be shining on the grass!

Brogan: That now is a solid key. . . Let me take it in my hand a minute.

Scarry: I will not do that. (*Puts key in pocket.*)

Brogan: What way could I harm it?

Scarry: The man that gavè it to me said not to let it out of my own hand. I will hold to that command.

Brogan: (*Sneeringly.*) You are very faithful to Hubert Darcy.

Scarry: He trusted me with it and he can trust me.

Brogan: If he has trust in you, it is you yourself maybe put too much trust in him.

Scarry: The thing he gave into my care, I will never give it up to any other one. There is no book or no paper will ever have me pictured doing that.

Brogan: I am saying you maybe think too much of Darcy.

Scarry: He is my master and my near friend. He will never be hurted or harmed by enemy or illwisher so long as I'll be living in the world.

Brogan: A pity he not to have been as faithful to yourself.

Scarry: He to say a sharp word to me, it is short till he would come back to make it up with me in some friendly way.

Brogan: Indeed he was very often visiting this old kennel.

Scarry: Evening or morning he was never hardly without taking a course around the place.

Brogan: If you are a man at all, Lawrence Scarry, you will rise up and draw down a revenge on the man was offering temptation to your wife!

Scarry: That's a blasted lie!

Brogan: I say he was offering temptation to Bride Scarry.

Scarry: It is not to my wife he would speak a word of the kind! I'd have the life of any man thought that.

Brogan: I am but saying what I know.

Scarry: She would have turned him out the door if he had but said one word. She would have told myself.

Brogan: That is the very thing she was about to do. The time you came up from drawing water

in the river who did you find before you in this place? Was it Darcy? and he and herself talking together.

Scarry: What harm if he was in it?

Brogan: You had but just gone out when he came in—all the same as if he had been watching you. I that was taking a pebble from my shoe made away through the coachhouse door. I came back there again in a short while to know was he gone out. He was there yet.

Scarry: Why wouldn't he be there?

Brogan: What he had said to her I don't know, but I heard well what she herself was saying—she had a very clear sweet voice.

Scarry: She had that.

Brogan: She was saying at that time: "I have my face turned to a better man." And after that she said, "I was certain you had some mischief in your heart"; and after that again, "It is Lawrence will be the judge." He broke out angry then and gave up his whisper and called out, "If you say one word to him it will be the worst word ever you said in your life. I'll put right fear on you, I'll master you"!

Scarry: Is it Darcy that was my friend said that!

Brogan: You yourself came in then at the door, and I made away by the bridge over the river.

Scarry: He said that to 'her! If you are lying I'll squeeze the breath out of you! (*Seizes him.*)

Brogan: So help me God I heard the woman that was your wife giving out those words in this place. I'll swear it in any court in Ireland!

Scarry: Let me out of this! I'll go task him with it! I'll take his life!

Brogan: You will find it hard to do that, and his people being around him in the big house.

Scarry: My seven curses on him and on his house and his four-footed beasts and his means and upon his soul! I'll put my heavy vengeance on him! I'll make an attack on him at the race-course in the sight of all!

Brogan: You will not. You will draw down on him a surer punishment than that. To put him back, and to lessen his means, and to bring down his pride, till he will quit the country being vexed and ashamed.

Scarry: What way will I do that?

Brogan: You have but the least little thing to do. Just to go into the stable beyond on this night, and to put what is in this paper (*takes out packet*) into the horse's flour and water or into his feed of oats the way he will fail in the race. That is the only best thing to do, and you not being too tender with the horse.

Scarry: Darcy's horse is it! My curse upon him! It's well pleased I'd be seeing him sunk in the river below, or to struggle and smother in a bog!

Brogan: That's right now.

Scarry: I'll go do it! I'll drag Darcy down!

O'Malley: You cannot go out at this time. It isn't hardly up to ten o'clock. They would see you coming in the yard. There is brightness in the young moon. You must wait till farther out in the night. They will all be in their sound sleep that time. The horse himself will make no outcry, you being no stranger coming to the stall.

Scarry: It is long to me till I'll set out, till I'll go do my revenge.

Brogan: We'll stop along with you.

O'Malley: We cannot. Here is Owen Conary coming to the door.

Brogan: Let you get shut of him, Lawrence, throwing yourself on the bed saying you have need of sleep, and that much is no lie! We'll come back here to you, and he to have gone his road. (*They go by left door.*)

Conary: (*Groping at door.*) Is there anyone within?

Scarry: Is it in here you are coming, Conary? This is a bad place for one that is questing to fill

his bag. It is not a great share of leavings is here after the great throng was in it, and the great feast we had these two nights back!

Conary: It is not food I am craving, Lawrence Scarry.

Scarry: Drink it should be so, and tobacco! There's no one comes into this place without coveting to bring something away out of it. There were some had an eye on the horse and another coveted—curse him—a nearer thing and a thing he never could reach to. And as to what you yourself are coveting (*turns up bottles*) it is gone, and no more to be got.

Conary: That is a sort of welcome should drive me out the door! I'm not one to be bothering or giving trouble! It is now and forever I will turn my back on you!

Scarry: (*Seizing and dragging him to hearth.*) Stop there now by the fire. (*Pushes him into chair.*) I've no mind to be left my lone to please any man or any two men, and I going to lie down in my sleep . . . (*Sits on bed.*) What sort is the weather without?

Conary: Fair enough now, but there is a mist coming up from the west.

Scarry: Dry your feet there from the damp of the road. Waken me after a while, and I to be too

long sleeping. I'll be wanting to go out in the darkness, for a night ramble. That's the time all will be quiet and no one to meddle or put you back . . . that's the time for mischief and for the fox to get his prey! (*Lies down.*)

Conary: It might be best. It's hard lie quiet through the hours of the night, when you are down and a care on top of you. . . . If I didn't know you to be racked and wore out I would put the beggar's curse on you! But God help you! There never was such trouble in anything ever a man put over him! A little saint she was and a loughy woman besides. Surely it was God called her, and His Lady. I could cry down my eyes thinking of her. The priest getting no leave to overtake her and not a good-bye in the world wide. (*Listens.*) That is good! The sleep is the best friend to any troublesome heart. But as to her that is gone, to be a day in her company would lengthen your life. A strange thing she to be holding the cup to me but three days ago; and in what world I wonder is she now? It is quiet and easy she should be at this time as it is well she deserved it. What call would she have to go walking? No children to care or to nourish; no debt that would be a weight on her mind. . . . (*Goes over and listens to Lawrence then comes back.*) Let him sleep on now while he can do it. God is the best and

maybe after a while he'll quieten things all over!
(*He nods over fire. Bride comes in. She stands by Lawrence. Then stoops a little.*)

Bride: Lawrence! Lawrence! Waken! It is I, myself, Bride your wife! (*There is no movement from Lawrence. Conary still sits over fire.*)

Bride: Conary! (*He does not answer, she comes nearer.*) Conary! It is I myself, Bride Scarry!

Conary: (*Uneasily.*) Is there anyone anear me?

Bride: It is Bride, your friend. Speak to me now, speak to me!

Conary: (*Getting up and shrinking.*) It is but a voice in my ear. Let me go out of this!

Bride: Speak to me; question me? I can do nothing without you question me.

Conary: I am affrighted, hearing the voice of the dead.

Bride: My heart is living, Conary. I have not passed the mering of the world. It is to serve Lawrence I am come and to give him a warning—to save him from bad handling and from harm, to save him from doing a great wrong. Question me, question me!

Conary: There is something before me—some whiteness, it might be the flame upon the hearth. Lawrence! Waken!

Bride: He to waken itself he cannot see me, he cannot hear me. Look now I am here before you. Many a yesterday I took the hunger off you, and now you will not do this little thing for me!

Conary: What is it? Who is it? Is it that I have my eyesight? Oh, the darkness is come upon me again! Let me go away out of this! (*He shrinks away groping out of door.*)

Bride: Is it not a hard case I to be a stranger now, and it is short since I was the woman of the house! (*Goes back to side of bed.*) Lawrence! Lawrence! have you no word at all for me! You would not be in dread of me: Lift up your lips to me that is your wife! . . . My grief, he cannot hear me—he cannot feel my hand! Who is there now to help me unless it might be his friends on the other side. (*She stands straight and lifts her hand.*)

I call now to the family of Heaven
To put ridges of mercy around him on every side;
Any bad thing might be coming from the left hand,
I put the King of the Graces between himself and
itself!

Listen Martin and Patrick that do be praying for us,
Do not let him be in bad case at the last!
He is all one with a bird has a trap closing around him.
Stretch out now and turn him to the lucky road!

(*Sound of talking at door. She goes to corner. Brogan and O'Malley come in.*)

Brogan: Is he in here at all?

O'Malley: He is in his sound sleep on the bed.

Brogan: That is very good. He will be fresh and lively for the work is before him.

O'Malley: It was a good thought you had, making up that story about Darcy.

Brogan: We could not have brought him to our way without that.

O'Malley: A foolish man he should be to give credit to it, and he knowing Darcy so well as what he does. But there was confusion in his mind with all the trouble he put over him.

Brogan: The jealousy to come on a man, it is easy make him believe all.

O'Malley: I was in dread we might have to do the job ourselves.

Brogan: I wouldn't ask to bring him into it if we had power to do it without him.

O'Malley: He having the key of the stable there'll be no stay in doing it.

Brogan: It's easy to get the key. It's likely it's in the pocket where he left it a while ago. (*Takes key from coat hanging by bed.*) It's as good for me to keep it myself. (*Puts it in pocket.*)

O'Malley: We can go on without him so.

Brogan: The horse that would rouse the whole place with kicking and clattering, and he seeing

strangers coming anear him. There is no one only Lawrence can handle him, and keep him quiet, he being used to his ways. (*Shakes him.*) Rouse yourself up now, Lawrence Scarry!

Scarry: What is it?

Brogan: Let you waken!

O'Malley: It is time to stir yourself.

Scarry: Is the night gone by?

Brogan: It is not. You have it before you.

Scarry: I was in a deep sleep.

Brogan: We are come back sooner than we thought. It is dark the night is turned. There is come a clout over the moon.

Scarry: I was through the world in my sleep.

Brogan: You are wakened out of it now.

Scarry: I was as if in some white place. It is likely it was a dream.

O'Malley: Let you rise up now.

Scarry: The sweetest sound of music ever I heard. (*He is sitting on side of bed.*)

O'Malley: Put on your coat now and come on along with us.

Scarry: (*Puts on coat.*) I am going out in the night.

O'Malley: Come on so.

Scarry: It is not with you I am going. I am going my lone.

O'Malley: So you can go—over to the big stables.

Scarry: It is not there I am going.

Brogan: Where is it so? Is it to lay a complaint against us and a warning?

Scarry: It is not. But I will not go in your company.

Brogan: Is it that you are going to renage and you after giving us your word?

O'Malley: Is it that you are falling back from drawing down your revenge?

Scarry: That plan of revenge is as if gone from my mind. I have no desire to hurt or to harm any person at all. (*Gets up.*)

Brogan: Ah, come along, man, with us and it will come back to you.

Scarry: It is over to Eserkelly I am going. I have a mind to go look at Brigit's grave.

Brogan: Making excuses you are. What would bring you there at this hour of the night?

Scarry: I am uneasy without going there.

Brogan: Scheming you are. What can you do for her? She is safe enough in the grave.

Scarry: The world wouldn't put it out of my head that she came anear me in my sleep.

Brogan: That is but vanity and foolishness. There is no one comes back from the dead.

Scarry: So nice she looked and so calm and so mournful. I am going to you now, Bride, till I will cry my fill for you! God knows, she to come back I would give her a good welcome, shadow and all as she might be!

O'Malley: It is that he is a coward and is afeard to do what he took in hand.

Brogan: He has us made fools of. He has us robbed.

O'Malley: It is easier save yourself from a rogue than from a liary person would not hold to his word.

Brogan: Is it that you are a traitor or in dread to keep your purpose?

Scarry: (*Turning from door.*) Is it of the like of ye I would be afeard?

O'Malley: (*Taking his arm.*) Come on now, Lawrence.

Scarry: (*Shaking him off.*) Don't touch my clothes or don't come anear me!

Brogan: Come on and do what you have to do or you'll repent it.

O'Malley: A renegade you are!

Scarry: Let you quit talking to me before I'll make you!

Brogan: No wonder he to be so cross and craven! It's likely what I said was no news to him. It's likely he knew well Darcy was after the wife. It's likely he had it planned to let her go with him before he wed with her!

Scarry: I'll have your life on the head of those words out of your lying mouth! (*Strikes at him.*)

Brogan: (*At door.*) You may believe me this time! There is shortness of life before you. I'll send you to the slaughter. If ever you leaped high on any horse you'll make a higher leap again with the hangman! (*Flings him back and goes out banging door.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene. A few days later. Office at Darcy's. A desk, one or two chairs and benches. Two girls coming in with a Policeman.

2nd Girl: Is this now the Magistrate's Court?

1st Policeman: It is so. It is here the Magistrate will find proof who is it is guilty of destroying his horse Shanwalla, the way it would not win in the race.

1st Girl: It is Lawrence Scarry done it. The world that is saying that.

1st Policeman: Keep your mouth quiet. That has yet to be proved.

1st Girl: My uncle, that is Pat O'Malley, is laying down it will be proved by sure token.

1st Policeman: Pat O'Malley! Take care will it be proved against himself.

1st Girl: It will not. Aren't we after coming here purposely to prove his alibi?

2nd Girl: A great wonder it was, Mr. Darcy to bring the horse out to the race and not to leave it in the stable the way it was.

1st Policeman: They thought there to be nothing on it, and it leaving the yard.

1st Girl: Sure, you saw the way it was, that it couldn't so much as raise a gallop, and all the world travelling to Inchy to see him, and all the bets that were on him gone astray.

1st Policeman: I wasn't in it myself, but sent patrolling the Loughrea road.

2nd Girl: A great pity you to have missed it. There was no one but had a bet on that horse.

1st Girl: I, myself, that put a shilling on him. Word I had from a knacky man that got a tip from the stand. I think I never will chance a bet again.

2nd Girl: I was late myself coming to the entrance gap, and everyone pressing through it; and there came a great noise of talking among the crowd, that I thought the race to be ended. The throng parted then and the light-weight came passing out, and he wearing Darcy's colours, grey and yellow. Very mournful looking he was, and his eyes going into the ground. Some man that was behind me on the road called out and asked was the honour of Mr. Darcy doing well at the leaps. And the jockey made as if an oath to himself and gave no answer at all.

1st Girl: No, but wait till I tell you. I that saw more again. I that went up on some barrels the time I heard great cheers for Shanwalla that

was coming the road; prancing up he was and his coat shining. If Darcy had a mind to sell him that time, I tell you he'd have his full price got!

1st Policeman: It would be lucky for Darcy if he did sell him.

1st Girl: The weighty part of the crowd came running to see him, such a welter and such a killing you never saw as was in it; climbing and knocking the wall they were, till there was nothing left standing only gaps.

1st Policeman: So I saw it myself after; that is the way it was.

1st Girl: Shouting Shanwalla they were, that was for Galway, and all Munster against him! But all of a sudden it is to go wild like he did and to stop and to rear up, and Lawrence Scarry that was leading him strove to soother him down. But as he came to the field it is to go into a cold sweat he did, and then he went around in a sort of a megrim, the same as a man that would have drink taken.

1st Policeman: So he had drink taken . . . of some sort.

1st Girl: And is it true, so, that it is to poison him they did?

2nd Girl: If they did itself, he is as well nearly as he was before. The farrier down from Craughwell that came and attended him. Sure

my grandfather was in it that is better again for cures, and that gave me the story down.

1st Policeman: It is the farrier makes a claim to have brought him round.

2nd Girl: Shivering he was, and they couldn't keep a drink with him he was that drouthy, and they gave him castor oil, for whatever you put before him, if it was soot and water, he must drink it. But the world wouldn't make him vomit, and it was my grandfather brought him round at the last, giving him a pint of forge water, and whisky and the white of an egg. And everyone that heard it said there was surely poison within in him.

(Second Policeman comes in.)

1st Policeman: *(To Girls.)* Go back there now out of the way. And let ye mind yourselves. It is as witnesses ye were brought here, and the less talk you let out of you the better it will be for the cause of justice and for yourselves. *(To 2nd Policeman.)* Did they find another magistrate to sit along with Mr. Darcy?

2nd Policeman: Out searching for one we were the whole of the morning and no one to be found, where they were all gone to the meet of the hounds at Rahasane.

1st Policeman: It wouldn't hardly be according to law, Mr. Darcy to judge his own case.

2nd Policeman: Sure, he has but to commit whoever is thought to have a hand in it for trial at the Galway assizes. A week is no great hardship in gaol.

1st Policeman: Did the Head Constable come yet?

2nd Policeman: He did not. He is in pursuit of some trace or track of the guilty person that was put into his hand.

1st Policeman: Who would he be now?

2nd Policeman: How would I know, and he not willing to tell me? In dread I might catch him myself, I suppose he was. He is one is well pleased to take full credit for all.

1st Policeman: There was some cause to suspect Pat O'Malley of Canamona they were telling me, and his cousin, James Brogan, from Limerick.

2nd Policeman: I never heard much against Pat O'Malley but that he is poor and has debts down on him. Brogan, though, has the name of being a wild card, a rag on every bush, knocking about here and there.

1st Policeman: It is likely it's after him the Constable is gone searching.

2nd Policeman: (*Looking from window.*) He should be here by this. Mr. Darcy that is coming in will be vexed not seeing him.

Darcy: (Coming in.) Is Lawrence Scarry here?

2nd Policeman: I didn't see him, sir.

Darcy: I'll want him to sift out evidence along with the Head Constable that might help us to find out who was it did this thing.

2nd Policeman: I believe the Constable is of opinion he all to has his hand laid upon the rogue.

Darcy: That's right. It is long to me till I'll have him before me. I won't be long sending him to his rightful place, that is gaol.

1st Policeman: He'll be best there, surely.

Darcy: He must be a terrible ruffian! I never heard of a worse case in my lifetime! To come breaking into my stables and to try and do away with my horse!

2nd Policeman: It was a very ruffianly deed.

Darcy: To go hurt a *man* you would want to put out of the way it would be bad enough. But I think it seventeen times worse to make an attack on an innocent creature that gave no provocation to anyone. You'd have been sorry to see the way he was!

1st Policeman: I was well pleased to hear he is at this time on the mending hand.

Darcy: That has nothing to do with it! It's no thanks to the villain if he did escape. There was

enough of poison left in the pail he drank from to do away with all the horses on the green of Ballinasloe!

2nd Policeman: So the Constable is after telling me.

Darcy: The black-hearted ruffian! It is crooked law that wouldn't mix that same poison into the diet of the man used it on Shanwalla! He'll get hanging, anyway. There's some justice in that.

1st Policeman: The law is very severe in those cases.

Darcy: It couldn't be too severe! I wouldn't grudge it to my own brother, and I to have one, and he to have done such a deed!

1st Policeman: Two men, some are saying, that were in it.

Darcy: It is glad I am to hear that! To give up two of them to the hangman will be some satisfaction, and will show some respect for Shanwalla!

1st Policeman: Here is the Head Constable coming, and a couple more along with him. They are bringing with them . . .

Darcy: The men they suspect, I suppose. Go tell them to hurry. And try can you find Lawrence Scarry.

1st Policeman: I'll not have far to go look for him. He is close at hand.

Constable: (Coming in.) I couldn't get here any sooner, sir. I have been searching the whole matter out.

Darcy: That's right. Have you got hold of the man that did it?

Constable: In my opinion I have.

Darcy: I was in dread you might not be able to put your hand on him.

Constable: No fear of that. There is one thing sure in this world—when there's a crime there's a criminal.

Darcy: It's not always so easy to find him.

Constable: In some cases it is not. But it was easy enough this time. I've got him.

Darcy: I thought there were two suspected.

Constable: O'Malley and Brogan you are thinking of. But they can clear themselves. They have their alibi as good as proved.

Darcy: Who are you going to charge so?

Constable: It is Lawrence Scarry.

Darcy: Scarry! . . . *My* Lawrence Scarry!

Constable: The same one.

Darcy: Rubbish! You might as well say that I myself did it!

Constable: The case is strong against him.

Darcy: Some one has made up false witness.

Constable: There was no need for that. There is proof.

Darcy: There couldn't be proof of what didn't happen. Larry loved that horse!

Constable: That makes the crime the worse.

Darcy: Where is he? He will be able to disprove it.

Constable: We have him now at hand. I am making a search in the room at Cahirbohil where he was housed. I found this piece of blue paper stuck under a candle. It was in a tattered condition and smelling of stale porter. It fits in shape and similitude with the twisted paper we found on the stable floor and that had some remains of the poison in it yet. There are some grains of the same sort here. This is the document proves the case through and through.

Darcy: If I thought it possible—but I don't—that he had gone out of his wits and done such a thing I would sooner withdraw the case than have it proved against him!

Constable: It would be impossible to do that. I have my report made to the inspector. It will be in the hands of the Crown.

Darcy: I tell you he couldn't have done it! It was in the night time it was done, after ten o'clock, between that and early morning.

Constable: It was within that time sure enough. You took notice yourself, sir, some of the flour was spilled from the box where it was.

Darcy: If I did I thought it might be a rat or a mouse or a thing of the kind. I knew no one could have come in. I had locked the door myself. I had the key all the time.

Constable: There was no other one, I suppose, has a key?

Darcy: No one—except Lawrence Scarry.

Constable: So I was thinking. (*Writes note.*) I wasn't rightly sure till now.

Darcy: It makes no difference. He wasn't near the stable. I was expecting him. He never came till morning. He told me he was tired out after the burying—and low-hearted—no wonder . . . and the day over, he had laid down to sleep on his bed.

Constable: We'll soon know can he give proof of that. I'm not one to rush at a thing without sure evidence.

Darcy: Why don't you go look for proofs against these other men? Had you no informa-

tion against them? We might be able to prove it. Bring them in.

Constable: All I heard was, they had bets put on against your own horse in the race. There was ill-feeling against them among those that lost their money. I was advised to make enquiry about them. I did that. I got no information was enough to charge them on.

Darcy: Bring them here, I might make out something. (*They are brought in. O'Malley is brought forward.*) Now look here, my man, if you were brought in here, it is that there is something against you. What is it? Do you know anything of what happened my horse? Did you ever see him or handle him? Say yes or no.

O'Malley: I will. Previous to the day of the races I never laid an eye on him.

Constable: He says he can give proof he was not out of his own house that night.

O'Malley: So I can, too. There are two little girls of the neighbours can bear testimony to that.

Darcy: Who are they? Will they be honest witnesses?

1st Policeman: Very decent little girls, sir, and well-spoken. Nieces of Pat O'Malley, I believe they are.

Darcy: What have they to say?

1st Girl: It was Thursday night. . . .

Darcy: What Thursday night?

1st Girl: St. Brigit's Eve for the world. We met Pat O'Malley coming home, where he had been to the burying at Eserkelly; and he having a pain in the jaw and it going athrough his head.

2nd Girl: That is so. Cold, I suppose he got.

1st Girl: We turned into the house with him, and we sat there for a while.

Darcy: For how long?

1st Girl: A middling while, and he telling us newses of the burying.

2nd Girl: Giving us an account of all the people that were in it.

Darcy: That's enough. All I want to know is what time it was.

2nd Girl: I couldn't know . . . only the middling right time.

1st Girl: It was just on the stroke of ten o'clock we went in——

2nd Girl. I was forgetting that. Just up to ten o'clock.

1st Girl: The wife put a hot plaster to the jaw and he went in to his bed, and we went away then, and the door was closed after us. Closed and locked; and he never left the house till morning.

2nd Girl: Till it was time to make a start for Inchy races. We were together going the road.

Constable: You see, sir, it is hardly worth while going on with this case.

Darcy: Go on then with the other, Brogan. Can he prove where he was that night?

Constable: That is a thing was laid down against James Brogan. He was seen coming out through a gap in the demesne wall at Cahirbohil about twelve o'clock Thursday night.

Darcy: That is better. He is likely the man we want. Have you any witnesses?

Brogan: You need bring no witness to that. I did come out that side. I thought it no harm where it was a mile of a short-cut. I had gone in to see a friend.

Darcy: At that time of night?

Brogan: No, but earlier. I went to visit him. I was coming back from the fair of Loughrea. Darkness overtook me on the road; I went to ask a lodging of him.

Darcy: What friend had you inside my demesne?

Brogan: I should sooner say kinsman by marriage. His wife's mother and my mother were mixed, blood thick, they were, two cousins. Any-

one that has learning can read it on the headstone in Eserkelly. He was Lawrence Scarry.

Darcy: What time was that?

Brogan: The time I went there it was close on ten o'clock. I stopped a good while, maybe two hours.

Darcy: Then Scarry was in his own room where you were with him all that time! I knew he never left it. I knew he was speaking the truth!

Brogan: I took my rest there for a while. But I did not say I was with him. I won't tell you one word of a lie. There was no one in the place but myself.

Darcy: Where was he then?

Brogan: The Lord be praised, I do not know, and that I cannot tell.

Darcy: He might have gone to some neighbour's house.

Brogan: To be sure he might. That's what I was thinking myself. It will be easy for him call that neighbour to witness.

1st Policeman: Owen Conary, the dark man that goes questing on the roads was talking abroad in the yard. I heard him give out he himself was the latest person was with Lawrence Scarry on that night.

Darcy: Call him in then. He might settle the matter.

Constable: He will, I'm thinking. One way or another. (*Conary comes in.*)

Darcy: What time were you with Scarry at Cahirbohil Thursday night?

Constable: If ever you were there at all.

Conary: Why wouldn't I be there? I was in it surely. The time I went in it was near to ten o'clock.

Constable: What way do you know that?

Conary: I know it by the number of the steps I made, and I coming the road from Kilchriest.

Constable: And Scarry was in it?

Conary: He was to be sure.

Darcy: How long did you stop with him?

Conary: I don't know was it an hour, half an hour? I couldn't be rightly sure.

Constable: Try and call up your memory now.

Conary: I wouldn't be sure. My mind was on other things besides time.

Darcy: You maybe stopped with him up to ten o'clock.

Conary: I did and later, I can be certain of that.

Darcy: This man Brogan says he was there at that time.

Conary: He did not come in when I was in it. Lawrence Scarry was there in his lone. I talked with him a short while, till being tired and down-hearted he stretched himself in sleep on the bed through the night.

Darcy: That's what he told me. It is certain he slept in his bed last night. This Brogan must be making a mistake or making up a story. He says he came in. You say no one at all came in.

Conary: No one—unless. . . .

Constable: Unless who? Tell it out.

Conary: I thought I saw . . .

Constable: He is getting away from the truth. You know that you cannot see, and you having the eyesight lost, and being as you are stone dark.

Conary: I never did before in my natural life. But I give you the bail of my mouth I saw that time, or it seemed to me that I saw.

Darcy: Go on. What did you see?

Conary: I saw Bride Scarry walking.

Constable: This is superstition and a mockery. We all know her to be dead.

Conary: I tell you she came in the spirit.

Darcy: I'm afraid his mind is rambling.

Conary: Why would she not come and the spirit not long gone out of her, where it is known God will

blow His breath into those that are dead a hundred or two hundred years?

Darcy: Did you speak to her?

Conary: I did not; and it is a great pity that it failed me to do it. But it was all strange to me. It is often I coveted to see the flame of the fire on the hearth, and there it was before me, and the walls of the house on every side. And as to her, I saw her as I never saw anyone in this life. But there being no one waking along with me, the fright went into my heart, and it failed me to question her, and I went out the door and made no stop or delay.

Constable: You are certain it was Bride Scarry? What sort was she?

Conary: She seemed to me to be coming from the south, and to have on her the lovely appearance of the people of heaven.

Darcy: He is given over to dreams and visions. We are getting nothing from him at all.

Constable: He was trying to befriend Scarry but there is nothing in what he says that can serve him.

Darcy: Stop a minute. Scarry did not leave the house? He was in bed asleep when you went out?

Conary: He laid himself on the bed. But he said he would not be long in it. He bade me waken him. He said he would be going out later in the night.

Constable: So he did go out later, and did the crime. I was full sure of that.

Darcy: It is hard for me to give up trust in him. He to have turned against me, I will never have faith in any other man in the living world.

Constable: He will give you his own account now of himself.

Scarry: (*Coming in between two policemen.*) Will you tell me what is going on, Mr. Hubert, or if it is by your orders it is going on? These peelers dragging me here and there! First they would not give me leave to come to you, and now they are shoving me in, the same as a thief on the road! (*To Policeman.*) Leave go your hold!

Constable: Keep a quiet mouth now and behave yourself!

Scarry: What call have you to be putting orders on me? It is Mr. Darcy is my master. I take orders from no other one.

Constable: It is likely you'll give heed to my orders from this out!

Scarry: Let you keep that thought for robbers and law-breakers! I'm not one of that class! I

never gave a summons or got a summons or gave my oath in a court!

Constable: It is not with a court but with a gaol you will be making acquaintance this night!

Scarry: Divil a fear of me! Whatever you have against me or make out against me, it is Mr. Darcy is well able to bring a man from the gallows!

Darcy: You need expect no help from me, Scarry, if the grave was there open before you!

Scarry: What in the world wide! What at all is it you have against me, Mr. Hubert?

Darcy: You will know that at the Assizes when you will be brought before the judge.

Scarry: Tell me out what it is, and I'll show you I am clear from blame!

Darcy: You'll show me! I would not believe one word coming out of your mouth!

Constable: There's no use talking. We know what way you passed the night before the race.

Scarry: Is that it now? Is that what has put you out, sir? You are vexed I did not come to mind the horse. It is very sharp blame you are putting on me for that!

Darcy: You need not try to put a face upon it! You cannot come around me now that I have knowledge of what you are!

Scarry: I had a right to have come, and you uneasy as you were.

Darcy: That's not it, I tell you!

Scarry: I told you I thought to come . . . and that I was racked and tormented . . . and maybe I had a drop taken . . . and sleep came upon me.

Darcy: I wish to God you had stopped in your sleep!

Scarry: I give you my oath, I'll never quit your yard again but to be minding your business night and day.

Darcy: You'll never be helper or head lad again in any stable I may own.

Scarry: That is hard judgment when all I did was to drowse awhile.

Darcy: It is not your drowsing and sleeping goes against you! It is the deed you went out for after your rising up!

Scarry: What way did you know I went out?

Constable: There now, he has allowed it.

Scarry: I never denied it.

Constable: What time now did you go out?

Scarry: It seemed to me like the dead hour of darkness, but it might not be so far out in the night.

Constable: What brought you out at all?

Scarry: I was troublesome in the mind.

Constable: You came then to Mr. Darcy's stables.

Scarry: No, it was not this side I came, but out across the meadows to the north.

Darcy: Speak out. Don't drag this thing on for ever.

Scarry: It was to the old church of Eserkelly I went, to the side of Bride my wife's grave.

Constable: You can maybe bring witness to that?

Scarry: Who would I bring? There was no one in it, unless God, and the dead underneath.

Constable: What did you go doing there?

Scarry: Asking her forgiveness I was if ever I was anyway unkind, and saying prayers for the repose of her soul.

Constable: (To Darcy.) This seems to be a humbugging story, sir, made up to get at your soft side, the way you will get him off.

O'Malley: Ah, what getting off! He said one time he was asleep and he says now he was rambling the fields.

Brogan: Let him tell that story to the birds of the air, for there is no one on the face of the earth will believe it.

Scarry: (*Seeing them for the first time.*) Is it you yourself, you red rogue, is at the bottom of this mischief? I should have known that where there was bad work you would be in it, yourself and your comrade schemer! (*To Darcy.*) They are two that would swear away a man's life for a farthing candle! There is no nature in them! They are two would think no more of giving false witness than of giving a blow from a pipe. Tell that story to the birds of the air is it! I will and to the magistrate that is my master!

Brogan: He gave little belief to all you told him up to this.

Scarry: I have more to tell and maybe he will believe it!

Brogan: You have nothing to tell but what will bring your own head into the loop!

Scarry: Maybe it's your own head it will bring into it!

Brogan: Do your best so, and see will your lies serve you.

Scarry: What brought you into the house that night? Why did you waken me? What did you

ask of me? Was it to come along with you to Darcy's stable?

Brogan: Stop your slandering mouth!

Darcy: Maybe there is something in it.

Brogan: I say this man has made up this false witness and this story because we have knowledge of what would hang him twice over, and we being willing to tell it out!

Scarry: You have nothing to tell against me, if it is not that for one half hour, God forgive me! I consented to your wicked plan.

Brogan: What I have to say I would sooner not say, because it concerns her that was near in blood to me, if she was mixed in marriage with yourself.

Scarry: Keep your tongue off her, you villain! Have some shame in you!

Brogan: (*To Darcy.*) Have I leave to speak?

Darcy: Go on.

Scarry: No! It would not be for honour her name to be spoken out of your false mouth, you that are a disgrace to the world! I know what you have in your wicked mind, and what when I was mad and crazed with trouble you made me give credit to for one minute only! I declare to

heaven that if you say it in this place it will be the last lie in your throat!

Darcy: (*To Brogan.*) Speak out.

Brogan: It is loth I am to do that, and I would not, without that I am forced by your honour's commands and this man's treachery. I know and I tell you out, it was he himself that made away with his wife!

Scarry: My God Almighty! (*Stumbles and holds a chair.*)

Brogan: Look, sir, at the way she died! Gone in the snap of a finger. Well as she was that you would take a lease of her life, as supple walking as a young girl. What was it happened her? Is it that the ladder was settled in a way it would go from under her, and to slip on a slippery flag, the way she would be quiet and dumb and could not hold to her word and tell out to her master that it was Lawrence Scarry himself had engaged for money to put injury on the thing was in his charge!

Scarry: Let me out till I'll choke him!

Brogan: Search your mind, sir, did she say she had something to lay before you! Was it he sent her out of the door? Was it he himself brought her in dead? Put away she was, before she could give out that word.

Darcy: (*To Scarry.*) You understand what he is saying. What answer have you?

Scarry: The twists and tricks of a serpent he has! Didn't I speak before and what did it serve me. (*Bride comes in and stays near door.*)

Darcy: (*Getting up.*) The case looks bad and black. It has gone beyond me. (*He looks at Constable's notes; the others whisper together.*)

Bride: (*Coming to Conary.*) Can you hear me what I say, Owen Conary?

Conary: I do hear you and know your voice, indeed.

2nd Policeman: (*Touching his shoulder.*) No speaking now.

Bride: But there is great need for us to talk together. We must have leave to do that. (*Turns and stands a moment near door.*)

A Boy: (*Coming to door.*) The horses are getting uneasy in the stable, let Lawrence Scarry come and quiet them down. (*Larry starts up.*)

Darcy: No, not you. Never again! (*Scarry sits down with head in hands. Darcy goes out, police, Brogan, and O'Malley follow him. Girls go to window and whisper, looking out. Bride comes to Conary.*)

Bride: Here I am now that you may question me.

Conary: I will do that, and I give great praise to God that sent you back to me. For I am in no dread of you this time.

Bride: You need be in no dread of me, indeed; and it is to save my man I am come, for he is at the rib end of the web, and no woof to be got, and not one to save him without your help and my own.

Conary: Answer me and tell me now what is to be done for him, and what way can he stand up to the judge, and he it may be going to his hanging tomorrow?

Bride: I am come here to stand between himself and his ill-wishers, and the man that put the curse of misfortune upon him.

Conary: Do that, for he is the worst God ever created, and it is bad is his behaviour and you could not beat upon his cunning. And it is a great wonder the Lord to allow all the villainy is in the world. And that they may meet with all they deserve at this time, and in the cold hell that is before them.

Bride: Let you not call out a judgment against them, but let you leave them to the Almighty; and I myself never will put my curse on them; but that He Himself may change everyone for the best!

Conary: Stretch out now and give aid to the boy that had the sea of the world's troubles over

him, since you yourself went from him to the other side, and that was a boy did not deserve it from God or man.

Bride: I will do that. For he was fair and honest until the man that is his red enemy put a net around him with lying words, and he broke away from it after. And he was a kind man to me, for a headstrong man, while I was with him, and I liked him well. Do now my bidding and I will leave you my blessing by day and by night, in the light and in the darkness, for from this out I will be free from the world's trouble and at peace.

Conary: I will do your bidding, indeed. And it is not lonesome I will be from this out, but I to be going the long road it will be as if I did not belong to the world at all; for it seemed to me the time I looked at you, the heavens to have opened then and there! (*They go up to corner. She is seen to be speaking to him. Presently they both go out.*)

1st Girl: (*Leaving window and coming down stage.*) They're coming back now from the stables.

2nd Girl: (*Looking at Scarry who still sits with head sunk on arms.*) Would you ever think now Lawrence Scarry to be such a terrible wicked man, to kill the poor woman stone-dead!

1st Girl: Darcy to turn against him—what will it be when he will come before the Judge of Assize and all the counsellors of the Crown?

2nd Girl: I thought it was but for a bit of funning Pat O'Malley bade us make up the story about him being in the house that night. Sure, what way would I know if he was in it at all? And now they'll be putting it in the newspapers and all around the world.

1st Girl: Whether or no, you cannot go back from it now. Well, I declare, I'd near pity the poor man if it was not for the bad deed he has done.

(Darcy, Constable and the rest come in.)

Constable: *(To Scarry.)* Come over here now and hear what Mr. Darcy has to say.

Darcy: There is nothing for me to do but to commit you to gaol.

Scarry: Is it that *you* give belief to what was said?

Darcy: God knows I would give the half of my estate to have the same thought of you I had yesterday. You never would hear a sharp word from me again. But what stand can you make against the Judge, where I must cast you off, that was your near friend?

Scarry: My mind is as if gone blind. I can keep no thought in my head. This is surely the crossest day that ever went over me. I can make no stand against such treachery.

Conary: (Coming forward.) Will I get leave to say one word . . . ? A message I am after being given . . .

Darcy: Have you anything new to tell?

Conary: A message I am after being given for Patrick O'Malley.

Darcy: Has it anything to do with this case?

Conary: Your honour will know that. I am bidden to tell you, Pat O'Malley, to give up now the thing that is in your hand, that is the sign and the token of your treachery, and of the deed you have joined in and that you have done.

O'Malley: (Taking his hand from his breast where he had thrust it.) There is nothing in it.

Conary: Let those that have eyesight say if there is! (*Constable goes over to O'Malley.*)

O'Malley: (Flinging a letter at Brogan.) It is you betrayed me! It is you gave it to me! There is no one had knowledge of it only yourself. (*Constable takes up and gives paper to Darcy.*)

Darcy: (Reading.) It is a promise to pay £50 to him so soon as Inchy races will be over, if so be the horse Shanwalla will not have been able to make a start.

O'Malley: It was poverty brought me to it, and the children rising around me.

Brogan: Keep your tongue quiet, you fool!

Conary: I hear your voice, James Brogan. I am not without a message to yourself.

Brogan: Some lie you have made up. Who is there in the living world would go send me a message in this place?

Conary: You will know who sent it, hearing it. It was given to me but now.

Brogan: There was no one came in or went out. I swear to that.

Conary: It failed you to see her; but she was here.

Brogan: (Uneasily.) She . . . What are you saying? What are you talking about?

Conary: She gave me this message: "Were you not a foolish man, James Brogan, to knock the ladder from under me, and I but just after saying to you that it is hard to quench life!"

Brogan: She did not—she could not——

Conary: You know well who it was spoke that word. Have a care! She is maybe not far from you.

Brogan: (Falling on his knees and looking at place she had stood.) I give my faith and my solemn oath, Bride, that the time I got wild and faced you I never thought to leave a hand on you,

to kill you, but only to put fear on you, the way you would not tell on me, and but to quiet you for a while!

Darcy: Do you understand what you are saying?

Brogan: "Living or dead I'll be against you," you said, and I threatening to do injury to your man. And if it was for my own profit I did injury to what he had in charge, it is for your own sake I put a revenge on him and strove to destroy him and to bring him down! (*Holds out his arms towards door.*) Are you gone from me now and for ever! Oh, Bride, you were always against me, and you are against me yet, and it is through you I will give myself up to the Judge and will go to my punishment as it is well I have earned it! (*The two policemen stand at each side of him as he stands up, and lead him and O'Malley to door.*)

Conary: (*To Scarry.*) Surely God has some great hand in you, giving leave to the woman to keep her promise for your help. And didn't she behave well, coming challenging through myself your enemies in the court, the way you got over them all, and you so near your last goal!

Scarry: Through you is it? Stop your raving. She to have left her standing in Heaven it is not with you she would have come speaking, or with any one at all only myself!

Darcy: It is a good thought he had facing them. But it's no wonder he to be apt at riddles, there is great wit and great wisdom in the blind. And it's little he could have done for you, Larry, but for knowing that I myself was on your side.

Constable: (To the two Policemen.) I'm full sure the beggar was in league with them and knew their secrets, and turned on them and betrayed them for his own safety, seeing me searching out the matter to the root.

2nd Policeman: I never heard in my time a spirit to give any aid to the law or to the police.

1st Policeman: There's nothing in the world more ignorant then to give any belief to ghosts. I am walking the world these twenty years, and never met anything worse than myself!

NOTES TO SHANWALLA

Some time ago I was looking through many stories told me on our countryside and given by me later in *Visions and Beliefs*, bearing witness to the consciousness of the presence of the dead, of spirits invisible, for here in Connacht there is no doubt as to the continuance of life after death; the spirit wanders for a while in that intermediate region to which mystics and theologians have given various names. But I felt doubtful as to using them; I hesitated to put them before an audience used to close reasoning and the presentation of proved facts. I feared they might be found inconclusive, trivial, meaningless. But it happened the next day as I was driving to church with one dear to me and now gone from me we were talking of kindred matters and he said, "I have no doubt at all there will be a return to intuition as in primitive days. Reason took its place, and reason was seized on with passion by the Greeks as a new force to be used in every possible field and way. But now it has gone as far as it can go, it has ceased to interest, to satisfy; it is to intuition we must turn for new discoveries."

I said then to myself that my countryside tales are justified. These people of lonely bogs and hillsides have still their intuition, their sensitiveness to the

unseen; they do not reason about it, they accept it as simply as they do the sighing of the west wind or the colour of the sky. I believe that what they feel and relate is perhaps of as great importance to that in us which is lasting, as the tested results of men of science examining into psychic things. For none have yet been certainly aware of much more than shadows upon a veil, vague, intangible, yet making the certainty clearer every day that when the veil is rent for us at our passing away, or made thinner for us during our stay in this world, it is not death but life that is to be discovered beyond it.

But as to proof of the return, "How shall they believe if one rose from the dead?" When I was working at this play, where the spirit of the wife returns, imperceptible indeed to the Court where she gives her message, yet able to give it and so to save her man, reason told me that all in that Court should be convinced, that Magistrate and husband and officials would go on their knees in prayer, or call out their belief in this triumph of one of "the cloud of Witnesses." But when it came to writing the scene, I suppose it was either intuition or experience that took the pen and brought it to its present end.

I was talking in a Venice salon one evening with a well-known English artist and a German Admiral. The artist told us she had once been dining in Kensington Palace with a Royal Princess, and after dinner as they were going upstairs she was left alone for a moment and a clear voice said from below, "Who is there?"

She was surprised at anyone thus calling out in such a place, and the Princess came running back, looking scared, and said "Did you hear anything?" "And when I told her, the Princess said, 'Yes, others have heard it too; it is George the IVth.'" This happened in Kensington Palace, and the spirit was that of a King. But the German Admiral, the Reasoner, said "Ach, we hear sthories of ghosts, and they are got up by people that want to keep the place for shmuggling!"

THE WRENS

PERSONS

THE PORTER

KIRWAN'S SERVANT

CASTLEREAGH'S SERVANT

WILLIAM HEVENOR } *Strolling Singers*
MARGY HEVENOR }

THE WRENS

Time: January 22nd, 1799.

Scene: Outside House of Commons, Dublin. Porter at top of steps. Kirwan's servant arriving.

Kirwan's Servant: Fine morning.

Porter: Middling; for January.

Kirwan's Servant: Are they making speeches yet?

Porter: They are. Arguing and debating, Lords and Commons, through night and through dawn, till they have the world talked upside down.

Kirwan's Servant: I suppose nearly the most of them is in it?

Porter: What there isn't of them you wouldn't miss out of it, unless it might be your own master, Mr. Kirwan.

Kirwan's Servant: He quitted the House after his big speech. He laid down to them a good line of talk.

Porter: He got over all his enemies in that speech.

Kirwan's Servant: He did, and the enemies of Ireland. They are as good as put down altogether. He'll be coming back in a while's time.

Porter: Why wouldn't he, and the vote to be taken yet? He's a man that has no mix in him.

Kirwan's Servant: Around in the attorney's office he is, writing out documents to go by messengers to England so soon as the bill will be thrown out. He bade me to go call him at the time the vote will be coming on.

Porter: It will not be long till that time. The speeches should be at their last goal.

Kirwan's Servant: (*Going to door.*) I'll take my station here. So soon as they'll start to clap the bell I'll go warn him. Though it's likely his one vote won't be hardly needed, with all that will be against the bill.

Porter. Maybe so. It's hard say. It being to be it will be.

Kirwan's Servant: There is no man is honest and is straight but will give his voice against it.

Porter: It's hard know what might happen from when we get up in the morning to when we go to bed at night; or half that time.

Kirwan's Servant: Here is Lord Castlereagh's servant coming to gather news for his master—

my black curse on him—that is one of the old boy's comrades!

Castlereagh's Servant: (Coming in.) Fine day!

Kirwan's Servant: It will be a better day inside an hour's space, when the bill for the Union with England will be defeated and thrown out. My joy go with it in a bottle of moss! If it never comes back it is no great loss!

Castlereagh's Servant: If it is it will be because there's more fools than wise men within the walls of that house.

Kirwan's Servant: It is what you're thinking that your master has the whole county bought. But let me tell you that he has not. It would take a holy lot to do that!

Castlereagh's Servant: There is no person having sense but would wish to be within the Empire of England.

Kirwan's Servant: He would not, unless he would come of a bad tribe and a bad family, and would be looking for a pension for his vote.

Porter: It might be so. Money does everything in the worst possible way.

Castlereagh's Servant: (To Porter.) You'll be apt to lose your own job of standing on the thrassel of that door, and the Parliament to be housed over

in London. It would be best for you while you have time shift over to our side. (*Shows him a purse and shakes it.*)

Porter: I don't know. Someway foreign money doesn't go far.

Kirwan's Servant: (*Sarcastically.*) What will he divide on you so? Why wouldn't you wish to be made a Lord? Or ask a County Court judgeship, and your wife to be flying hats and feathers. Have you any knowledge of the law?

Porter: More than the most of them! I am well able to administer an oath.

Castlereagh's Servant to Kirwan's: There is no one against the bill but some that are like yourselves not having learning and that don't travel.

Kirwan's Servant: There are, and noble and high-blooded people are against it! Languaged people that can turn history to their own hand!

Porter: They might not. To be supple with the tongue is not all.

Kirwan's Servant: I tell you the most thing in the mighty world could not save that bill from being thrown out and refused!

Porter: It's hard say. There was no great strength in the wrens that destroyed Ireland the time they went picking crumbs on a drum, and wakened up the army of the Danes.

Kirwan's Servant: And what sort is it you are thinking will destroy the liberties of Ireland this day? Is it that couple of raggedy strollers are disputing along the side path of the Green?

(*Enter Hevenor and Margy, disputing.*)

Margy: (*Pushing Hevenor.*) Bad cess to you bringing me foraging around, running and wandering, by roads and cross roads, by hedges and by walls, the cold and the slashing rain upon me! There's no stay in you but as if you were a wild duck. From country to country it goes.

Hevenor: Well for me if I had its wings! To stop in the one place with your talk at me and your prating, I'd as soon be in the body of a gaol!

Margy: I to have nothing of my own, or a skirt that would bring me to the church, no more than a dog or a sow!

Hevenor: That is lies you are telling and you owning by marriage a good man that is myself!

Margy: I could have had great marriages if I didn't choose you, and many wondered at me!

Hevenor: Be easy now! It's too much you have to say. It would take twenty to keep you in chat!

Margy: And I dreaming the day I wed with you of little houses as white as snow, and a bunch of keys in my hand!

Hevenor: Ah, you're entirely too lavish in talk.

Margy: My old fathers that had stock and land, and the bacon over their head. And what am I myself but a holy show by the side of the road? To bring me singing through the streets, that is the last thing of all. God help the poor! The rich can rob around.

Hevenor: Hold your whisht, can't you? There is grand people up at that door.

Margy: English they should be by the rich clothes of them. They are your business. Let you word out a Government song.

Hevenor: (*Sings.*)

A song for Britain and her sons,
A song of harmony,
And now and ever let it breathe
Of truth and loyalty.
Its theme the same where'er we be,
Her palace isle we'll sing,
The laurels and the victory
Of Britain and the King!

Castlereagh's Servant: That's very good! The whole country is turning to join with Britain, the hungry as well as the high up.

Kirwan's Servant: (*Threatening Hevenor.*) Get out of this with your bawling, if it fails you to sing straight and sing honest!

Hevenor: I am singing honest.

Kirwan's Servant: You are not, but for profit and gain.

Hevenor: Amn't I a Catholic? Why wouldn't I go with the Bishops and the Clergy?

Castlereagh's Servant: They have sense, coming to our side.

Hevenor: Sure the Government has them promised that the Parliament to change over to London, there'll be Catholic Emancipation on the minute!

Kirwan's Servant: I never could believe in lies!

Hevenor: That's my hearing of the thing.

Kirwan's Servant: I wouldn't believe it from the Pope!

Margy: That's what I do be telling him myself—England is all promise and no pay.

Hevenor: What did my own Bishop put out down in Mayo? "Let us join," says he, "with the British," says he, "that are the wisest, the freest and the happiest people on the whole face of the earth!"

Margy: Ah, he is but in dread of corner boys like yourself joining strikes and setting themselves up against the Pope the same as those lads out in France.

Hevenor: "For self and clergy," says he, "we will stand and fall with the British."

Margy: What will stand will be on the other side, and what will fall will be on this side! It is England will get the cream and leave us the broken milk.

Hevenor: No, but we being paired and wedded with the Sassenach, we'll be full and easy like themselves.

Margy: To be banishing away reared people to be playing skittle-alley out in London! That will give the country no fair play.

Hevenor: Showing kindness and sharing wealth the same as the children of one house!

Margy: What a fool I am! Doesn't the world know the English to be hard and wicked and the Irish fair and easy? It is to turn Dublin you would to be but a little village of houses?

Hevenor: Women have no intellect to give out such things; great voice and little head!

Margy: I would not to gain the big world entirely give leave to the Parliament to shift over out of this so much as nine lengths of a cow's tail! London is entirely too thronged. As many people as you'd see wheat in a field. How would we get our own handling and our way?

Hevenor: It's a bad way we are getting up to this!

Margy: A great wonder the Lord to stand the villainy is in it! The English are the worst people under the rising sun. With what sort is it you are wishful to mingle and join, after God Himself putting out His hand to banish snakes and serpents out of Ireland?

Hevenor: There is plenty of that class in it yet ready to ate one another.

Margy: We might ate one another at some times, but they'd ate the whole of us!

Hevenor: Too much of quarrelling and slandering. It is time for us live in peace.

Margy: Ah, for ten thousand years Ireland was fighting and what would ail her to stop at this time?

Hevenor: It is the power of England will put down your pride, and the law of the Union passed.

Margy: If they do pass it no one would be forced to obey it. It is a good man said that.

Hevenor: Them that said it will be put down as rebels.

Margy: It is rebels in good clothes will be put down that time in place of rebels in frieze. It is all rebels we'll be together, the Lord be praised!

I tell you I to suckle 20,000 sons, I'd rear them the same as Hannibal!

Kirwan's Servant: Good woman! That is right talk!

Hevenor: (To Castlereagh's Servant.) It is emancipation she begrudges us, and we to be equal with the Protestants.

Margy: (To Kirwan's Servant.) All the laws of England would not make you the equal of myself! I never will give in to be reduced to a Catholic!

Hevenor: (To Castlereagh's Servant.) Isn't she the great Protestant with her high notions?

Margy: If I am, it's in the shadow of a Protestant house I was reared, and a good house. Wasn't my grandmother hen-woman to the Duke of Leinster? God be with my poor Lord Edward, the best that ever ate the world's bread! It's often she roasted an egg in the ashes for him and he in his young age. It is for himself she's wearing a black ribbon on this day, tied around the frill of her cap. It's myself will sing him through the three parishes.

(Sings.)

We'll arm ourselves for God is good and blesses
them who lean

On their brave hearts and not upon an earthly
king or queen;

And freely as we lift our hands we vow our blood to
shed

Till in some day to come the green will flutter o'er
the red!

Kirwan's Servant: More power to you, Ma'am!
That every day may thrive with you! (*Gives money.*)

Hevenor: (To Castlereagh's Servant.) Give my-
self some little coin into my hand, your honour,
and I'll give out a good verse for the Union.
(*Sings.*)

"The laurels and the victories
Of Britain and the King;"

Castlereagh's Servant: I'll do that much for you.
(*Puts hand in pocket and takes out money.*)

Margy: (Pushing back his hand.) Do not give
it to himself but to me! Everything he will handle
he will drink it.

Hevenor: I'm no good when I'm in my sense
and in my mind. But when I have a drop taken,
it's then I will bring out the songs.

Margy: He had enough taken yesterday to
last him to the world's end! Going to public
houses in company does not answer him. The
drink does but drive out his wits.

Hevenor: It's to put a good mouth on herself
she says that. She pretends to be proud, and
reflects on me.

Margy: When they get themselves into a habit it is hard for them get out of it after!

Hevenor: That you may never have the price of your shroud! That one would begrudge so much as bog water out of a tea-cup.

Margy: Whatever class of drink he took last night, what way did he get the price of it but to bring away and to put in pawn my stuffed pincushion. When I cast it up to him after he was breaking his heart laughing.

Hevenor: I did but lighten her travelling load!

Margy: My pincushion I got from the minister's wife and I a child rising up. The first little stick of furniture ever I had, and I bringing it from road to road till such time as I'll get a little table to put it on, and a room would hold the table, and the bed; and a little kitchen along with it, the way I'd be in Heaven having a little place of my own.

Hevenor: You'll never be in Heaven or within fifteen mile of it!

Margy: So much as the image of a farthing he never leaves it in my hand. Give him the pledge against drink. That's the only best thing to do. He is a young fellow that has no understanding.

Hevenor: That the Almighty may make you a worthy woman!

Margy: So wild and arch as he is he's no good for the world only drinking. You to give him a pint he'd ask to go inside in the barrel.

Hevenor: So stubborn as you are! Would you downface me!

(Hevenor sheltering behind Castlereagh's Servant, Margy trying to get at him.)

Margy: To make a trade of it he does. He'll drink the devil into him.

Hevenor: She is such a terrible barge you couldn't stand against her. *(To Castlereagh's Servant.)* Give me the bit of silver in my hand and I'll go!

Margy: Do not till such time as he will have the pledge taken!

Castlereagh's Servant: Will you take it so?

Hevenor: I'm too well pledged before this, being pledged to herself!

Castlereagh's Servant: Take it now. I'll get you good custom for your songs. You'll be of use to me, coaxing and turning rebels to the side of my master.

Kirwan's Servant: Don't mind doing that, but take the oath against drink and live peaceful with the good woman at your side.

Hevenor: It is likely it would fail me to hold to it.

Castlereagh's Servant: Take it to St. Bridget's Day, that is but nine days from this.

Hevenor: I would feel that much time too long in passing.

Kirwan's Servant: (Sneeringly.) Take it so till the Union bill will be thrown out, and that will be inside of a few hours.

Margy: That's no use! That much is not worth while.

Hevenor: It will be worth while if I think it to be worth while.

Margy: I'd as lief he not to take it at all.

Hevenor: In troth I'll take it if I have a mind to take it.

Castlereagh's Servant: (To Porter.) Give him the oath as you are able, and make an end of it.

Porter: Wait till I'll get the book. *(Goes in at door.)*

Hevenor: I don't know. I never took a book in my hand to swear this or that.

Margy: It's best for you wait till such time as you'll get a fright, or a vision of the bones of death, and take the oath in earnest.

Porter: (Coming out.) Kiss the book.

Hevenor: Give it here to me! *(Snatches and kisses it.)*

Porter: Word this now after me. (*Hevenor repeats it after him.*) “I will touch no drop of drink, or anything you’d call drink, until such time as the Union bill now within in that house will be thrown out and rejected and beat! So help me God!” (*Takes book back into house.*)

Hevenor: I took it now in spite of you. Any man to offer me a glass of whiskey I’d sooner he to give me a clout on the head!

Castlereagh’s Servant: Where now is the song?

Hevenor: (*Sings.*)

“United with Britain may Erin for ever

In commerce, in arts, and in science advance;

United with Britain may Ireland for ever

Live mighty and free, independent of France!”

Margy: (*To Kirwan’s Servant.*) It’s much that he does not pull down that green flag, and it having King David’s harp on it and the picture of an angel on its front!

Hevenor: Give me the bit of silver in my hand now, your honour, where I have it well earned.

Castlereagh’s Servant: There it is for you.

Hevenor: That’s a valiant lot of money! That you may reign long!

Castlereagh’s Servant: Follow on now with that song.

Hevenor: (Tries and clears throat.) Checking that one and her arguments has put a sort of a foggy mist in my throat. I must go banish it with a small drop of porter.

Margy: Porter! You have no leave to touch that, and you having the pledge taken.

Hevenor: Ah, won't the bill be cast out before I will get to the drink house?

Castlereagh's Servant: It might not.

Hevenor: (Pointing to Kirwan's Servant.) That one has it promised me it will.

Castlereagh's Servant: Little he knows. It might never be thrown out at all.

Kirwan's Servant: I tell you it will be!

Castlereagh's Servant: There is bets on it going through.

Kirwan's Servant: Wait till you'll see! I'll bet you a golden guinea it is out it will go!

Hevenor: And must I keep from the drink that not to happen?

Castlereagh's Servant: You took that oath, sure enough. You cannot rise out of it now.

Hevenor: So I did, God forgive me. (*Turns to Margy.*) You are the worst head to a man ever I saw, giving me leave to do that!

Margy: You have the money in your hand to lay out in some better way.

Hevenor: I wouldn't handle a halfpenny belonging to him, and I as wise then as I am now! Where is the use of it and it not bringing me my heart's desire?

Margy: It will maybe not rise you out of your senses this time!

Hevenor: I to be bare empty I would say nothing, but wealth to be in my hand and there to be no frolic or pleasure in it, it is that is killing me entirely.

Castlereagh's Servant: It's an enemy to himself that will turn back to drink that is the misfortune of all.

Hevenor: Silver crowns in my hand, and I maybe to lay myself down this night as innocent and as timid as a coney of the rocks, never felt the power of still-whiskey!

Margy: He'll be turning to it again, and the pledge loosened, as sure as there's folly in a fool.

Hevenor: If I had but thought to take my fill before they knocked a promise out of me. Music that would be going a-through me, and a poet's wreath around my head! Kindness in my heart

that I would forgive the whole world, and it after thrusting me from its door!

Margy: It is fighting it would be more apt to leave you.

Hevenor: It might—the drink is very lively. Attacking colour sergeants and officers and generals! And I having but a little wattle of a stick and they with all the guns of Buonaparty! It is to hold the gap of battle I would the same as Brian Boru! (*Sings.*)

“On Clontarf he like a lion fell, thousands plunged
in their own gore;

I to be such a hero now I'd ask for nothing
more.”

Kirwan's Servant: Ah, what are you making such lamentations over. You have but to hold to your promise till the Bill is cast out and that time will be short.

Hevenor: That it may be so!

Castlereagh's Servant: What's that you're saying? Sure you're on the side of the Union.

Hevenor: I was, but I am not. I made another thought.

Castlereagh's Servant: Is it that you are forgetting about Emancipation?

Hevenor: I am not. It is of my own emancipation I am thinking.

Castlereagh's Servant: Is it a turncoat you are?

Hevenor: I amn't condemning anyone down, but I wouldn't give an inch of your toe for the man would let anything interfere with his own liberty.

Castlereagh's Servant: You rap! You common rascal!

Hevenor: Haven't I myself to mind as well as another? As for Lords and Commons, before I will give in to neglect myself, they may die on the side of the road.

Margy: Ah, you tricker, to turn around for good or bad as quick as that! It is I myself would not do a thing of the sort. To walk honest and walk pure is my way! (*Sings.*)

"I have a leg for a stocking,
I have a foot for a shoe,
I have a kiss for a croppy,
And down with the orange and blue!
Out with Castlereagh and Pitt and the Union!"

Castlereagh's Servant: You fool of a woman! Don't you know the English bill to be cast out your man's pledge is swept along with it.

Margy: I was forgetting that.

Castlereagh's Servant: Pitt and the Government to get their way on this day, he is bound and tied to temperance and has the life pledge taken.

Margy: In earnest?

Castlereagh's Servant: A sober man and a quiet man at your side.

Margy: And the little house I'd have? And the pincushion?

Castlereagh's Servant: What's to hinder you?

Margy: (*Sings.*)

"I have a foot for a stocking,

I have a leg for a shoe,

I have a *kick* for a cropp'y,

And *up* with the orange and blue!"

(*A bell rings inside door, but none hear it.*)

Kirwan's Servant: (*Shaking her.*) That my curse may follow you? Shut your traitor mouth! A disgrace you are to the world!

Margy: Leave go of me! I have my own business to mind.

Kirwan's Servant: You to renege that was calling out this very minute on our side!

Margy: At that time I had not understanding.

Kirwan's Servant: To go join with them that would send Ireland to the slaughter!

Margy: It is not Ireland I have in charge. It is William Hevenor I have in charge.

Kirwan's Servant: To go bring such a great stain on your name and you turning against the country's friends!

Margy: By my faith it's my own friend I have to think of, and not of the other breed!

Kirwan's Servant: Can't you be loyal to Ireland that is your own country and your island?

Margy: So I am loyal—to my man. Everything should be done beyond measure to mind him and to change him for the best. If I wouldn't be thanked by the world I might be thanked by God.

Kirwan's Servant: A great wonder it is, Judas not to have been a woman!

Margy: If you had a hundred in family a husband is the nearest. Isn't it better to me Parliaments to go to wrack in the clouds than my man to go live blazing drunk! (*Sings.*)

“Then bumper your glasses, to George drink a health

And give him peace, happiness, honour, and wealth!”

Hevenor: What's that! Let you quit sounding out that song! Is it that you are singing against myself?

Margy: If I am it's for your good.

Hevenor: It's I can sing against yourself so.
(*Sings.*)

“Oh the French are on the Sea,
Says the Shan Van Vocht!
Oh the French are on the Sea,
Says the Shan Van Vocht!
Oh the French are in the Bay,
They'll be here without delay,
And the orange will decay,
Says the Shan Van Vocht!”

Margy: (*Putting hand on his mouth.*) No,
but hearken! (*Sings.*)

“United with Britain may Erin for ever
In commerce, in arts, and in science advance;
United with Britain may Erin for ever
Live mighty and free, independent of France!”

Hevenor: (*Breaking free and closing her mouth,*
sings.)

“And their camp it shall be where,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
Their camp it shall be where,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
On the Curragh of Kildare,
The boys they will be there
With their pikes in good repair,
Says the Shan Van Vocht!”
(*She throws her shawl over his mouth. They*
struggle with one another.)

Castlereagh's Servant: I bet two to one on the woman!

Kirwan's Servant: I will put all I have on the man.

(A great cheering inside House. Porter comes out and they turn and see him.)

Come over here. Where were you? If ever you lost sport you lost it today!

Porter: Do you hear that shouting within in the House?

Kirwan's Servant: What is it? What happened? Is it time for the vote?

Porter: The vote is after being taken. Where was your master?

Kirwan's Servant: I disremembered. I didn't call to him. Listening to these vagabonds—the curse of the country on them. I didn't feel the time passing. It cannot be the bill is thrown out?

Porter: It is gone through.

Kirwan's Servant: Gone through! That was a holy crime. I thought it would never come to pass!

Porter: Your master, Kirwan, would have saved it. It was but got through by one vote.

Kirwan's Servant: *(Sitting down on step.)* I have a great wrong done him, and all his sweat lost! His heart will be thrashed with this.

Porter: It's no blame on you to be downcast. It's this House will be lonesome with nothing but its own pure walls. A pity it to be brought to an end when its hour was not spent.

Castlereagh's Servant: And yourself to be left bird alone!

("Rule, Britannia," is played off. He takes down Green Flag and puts up Union Jack. More cheers inside; and groans from the street.)

Margy: (*To Hevenor.*) Come on now out of this.

Hevenor: I never enjoyed a worse day. There was nothing in it but was wrong.

Margy: No, but the best day ever came before you. We'll have great comfort in the bye-and-bye and a roof to put over the child. You'll be running down drink from this out, the same as the fox and the cherries. Give me now that money where you will not put it astray on me this time. We'll go get the little pincushion out of pawn!

CURTAIN.

NOTES TO THE WRENS

I wrote this what seems a long time ago, before the war, and in looking at it now I find it hard to get into the mood in which I wrote it. I had been reading the history of the passing of the Bill for the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, that now, in this year 1921, seems likely to be undone. This is how its story is told in folk lore:—"As to the Union, it was bought with titles. Look at the Binghams and the rest, they went to bed nothing, and rose up lords in the morning. The day it was passed, Lady Castlereagh was in the House of Parliament, and she turned three colours, and she said to her husband, 'You have passed your treaty, but you have sold your country.' He went and cut his throat after that. And it is what is said by the old people, there was no priest in Ireland but voted for it, the way they would get better rights, for it was only among poor persons they were going at that time. And it was but at the time of the Parliament leaving College Green they began to wear the Soutane that they wear now."

Book history tells us that the Bill was passed on its first reading, on January 22, 1799, by only one vote;

and my little play imagines the losing of a vote that would have at least made the numbers equal, through so slight a cause as a quarrel between two strolling vagabonds, that disturbs the attention of a servant from watching the moment to call his master, who would have cast his vote against the Bill.

I see in some notes made before the writing that I had planned "a human comedy, the changing of sides of man and wife," and that if she helps to a victory for the over-Government "to bring away the Parliament out of Ireland" it is against her own conviction, and but to save her husband from drunkenness and gain a home for herself, and that in so doing it is likely she would be praised by moralists, but the common people would put their curse upon her and him as they have put it on the even less responsible Wrens that lost Ireland a victory through awakening the Danish sentinels by pecking at the crumbs upon their drums.

Sometimes in making a plan for a play I set the scene in some other country that I may be sure the emotion displayed is not bounded by any neighbourhood but is a universal one. And I see upon a forgotten stray page that the persons of the play in my mind were at one time an Athenian who is for the victory of his city and quarrels with his wife who belongs to Sparta. But he is too fond of the wine cup to be of much use to the one or the other side, and hearing that the Spartans are at the very gates of Athens he is persuaded to abstain from the juice of grape or barley until their victory is declared, and this he is assured, will be before nightfall. Then the wife turns round

and is all for Athens in order that his pledge may be forever kept, and so "they work against each other and upset each others plans and the plans of others, and she is said to be 'A good woman for her husband,' but others said she was a bad woman for the country."

Of these plays *The Image* was written in 1909—*Shanwalla* and *The Wrens* in 1914—*Hanrahan's Oath* in 1915. They were all produced for the first time at the Abbey Theatre, December 27, 1921. The days in which I am correcting these pages are anxious ones, for our Treaty of Peace with England is yet in the balance, or as an old man has just said to me "on the toss of a button."

And the Wrenboys when as always they came yesterday, St. Stephen's Day, gave but little of the old rhyme about that disaster remembered against the offending wren these thousand years, but sang in its place, a song of praise for Kevin Barry, the boy who was but last year "hanged in Mountjoy Gaol, for Ireland's sake."

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